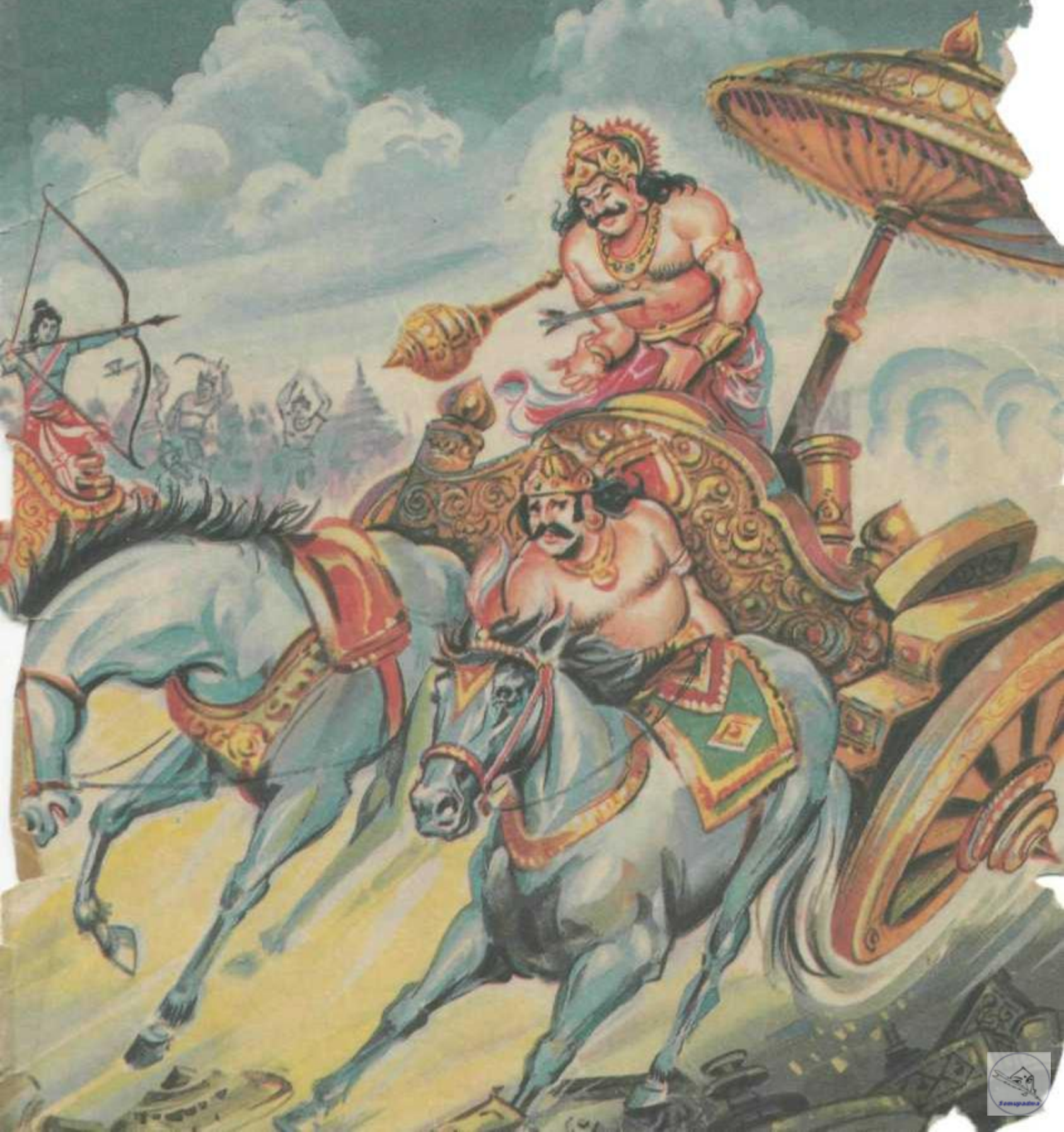


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A. ....

Q. In which State is Ganesh Chaturthi the most popular festival?

A. ....

Q. Which is the 'Festival of Colours'?

A. ....

Q. In which State is Durga Puja widely celebrated?

A. ....

Q. Which town in Karnataka celebrates Dussehra with royal pomp and pageantry?

A. ....

Q. Match these four harvest festivals to the State where each is celebrated. The first one has been done for you.

- i) Onam : Kerala
- ii) Baisakhi : .....
- iii) Pongal : .....
- iv) Bihu : .....

Assam, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh

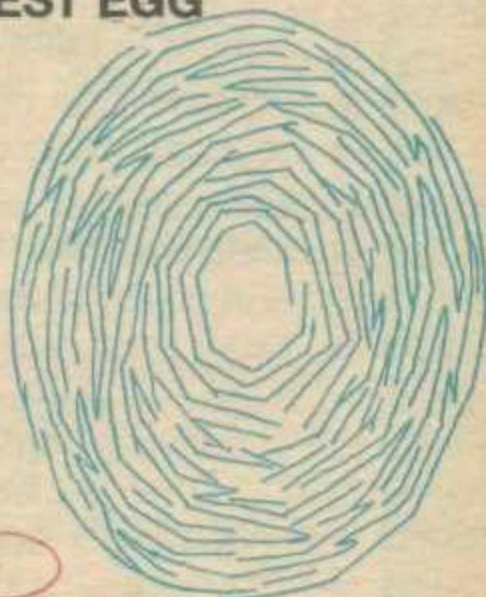
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Vol. 18 JANUARY 1988

No. 7

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\* A FISH ENDS A TRAGEDY: That is  
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the Story of Shakuntala, through pictures.

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## GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

मृदघट इव सुखभेद्यो दुःसन्धानश्च दुर्जनो भवति ।

सुजनस्तु कनकघटवद् दुर्भेद्यश्चाशुसन्धेयः ॥

*Mṛdghaṭa iva sukhabhedyo duḥsandhānaśca durjano bhavati*

*Sujanastu kanakaghaṭavad durbhedyāścāśusandheyah*

Like an earthen pot which can easily crack and once cracked cannot be easily made whole again, a mean fellow falls out easily and cannot be befriended again. But, like a pot made of gold which does not crack easily and if it cracks, it can be mended easily, a noble man falls out rarely and if he does, he can become a friend again easily.

— *The Panchatantram*

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Controlling Editor:  
NAGI REDDI  
Founder:  
CHAKRAPANI

## WELCOME TO 1988

"Time has no divisions to mark its passage, there is never a thunder-storm or blare of trumpets to announce the beginning of a new month or year. Even when a new century begins, it is only we mortals who ring bells....," said Thomas Mann, the celebrated German writer, in his book, *The Magic Mountain*.

How correct he is! We human beings alone can make the year what it will be, barring Nature. We can make it a happy year or a sad one.

Individually, we are too small to make the year either happy or sad. But we can resolve to do our best to make it a happy one—and act accordingly.

Let us do so.

### Thoughts to be Treasured

Religion taught us to return good for evil.

—Mahatma Gandhi



# "OKAY TROOPS, OPEN FIRE!"

**U**ncle Leo gave the order to attack. We lifted our

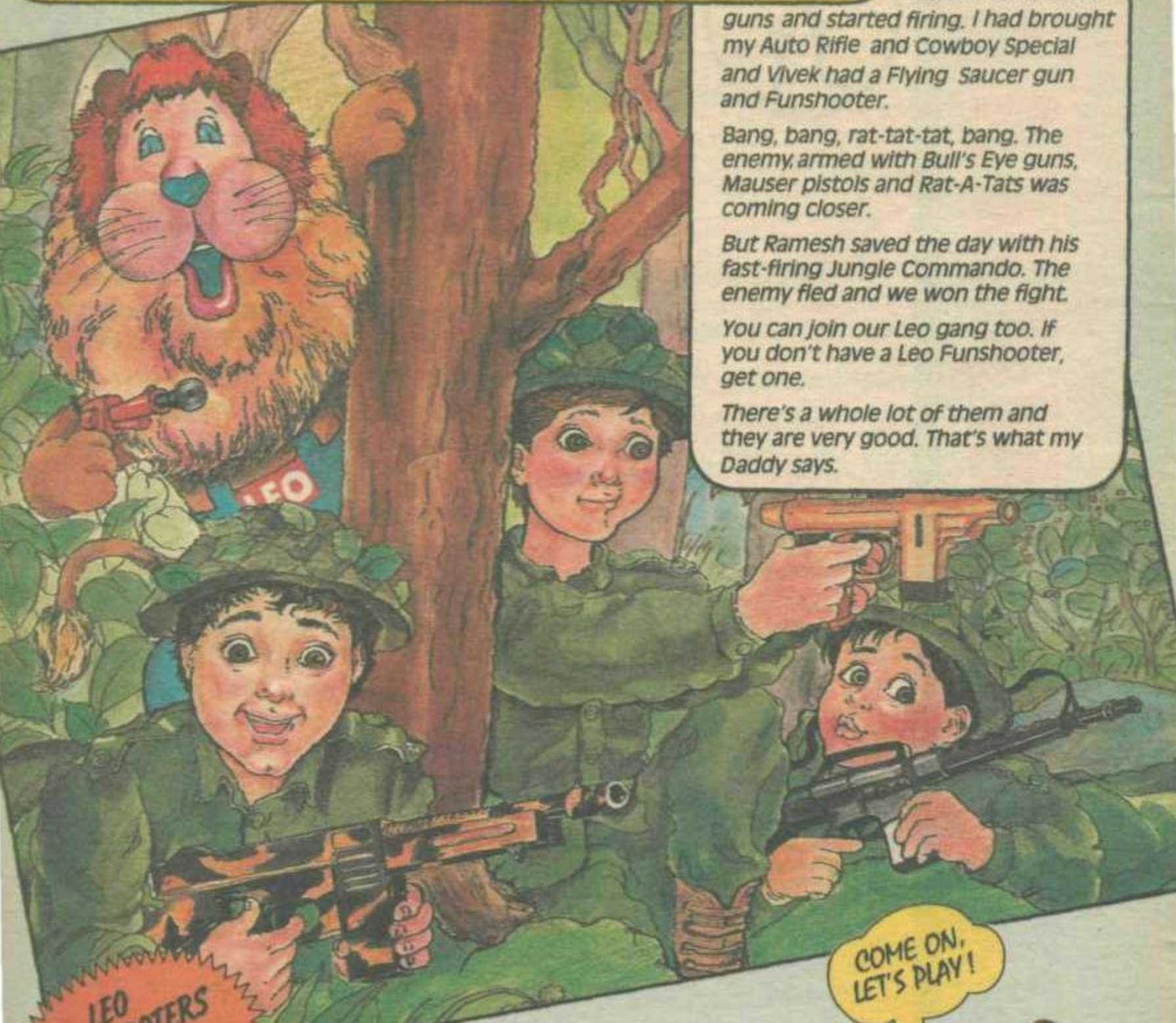
guns and started firing. I had brought my Auto Rifle and Cowboy Special and Vivek had a Flying Saucer gun and Funshooter.

Bang, bang, rat-tat-tat, bang. The enemy, armed with Bull's Eye guns, Mauser pistols and Rat-A-Tats was coming closer.

But Ramesh saved the day with his fast-firing Jungle Commando. The enemy fled and we won the fight.

You can join our Leo gang too. If you don't have a Leo Funshooter, get one.

There's a whole lot of them and they are very good. That's what my Daddy says.



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# NEWS FLASH



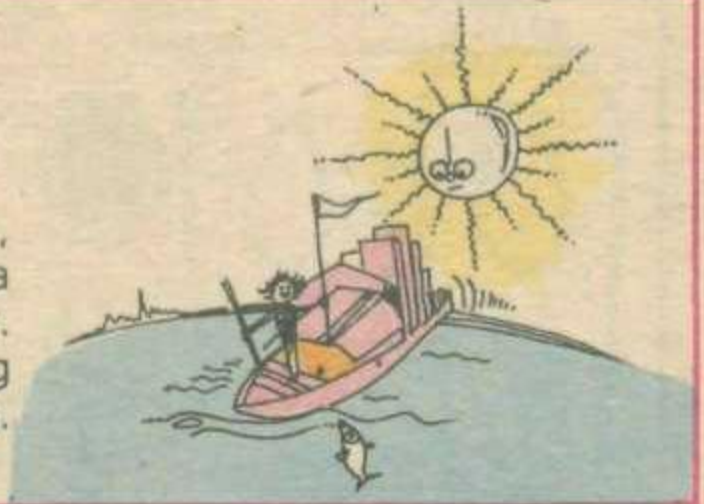
## THE GIGANTIC ICEBERG

An iceberg 40 km wide and 158 km long has broken away from Antarctica and is drifting in the Ross Sea.

It is so big that if somehow it could be shifted to Los Angeles, it could meet all the water needs of the city for the next 675 years!

## LONE GIRL IN THE SEA

Tania Aebi of New Jersey, now aged 21, sailed into the sea alone two years ago in a small boat presented to her by her father. She spent all the time on the sea, touching briefly ports in Bermuda, Panama, Australia, Sri Lanka etc. She is now back home.

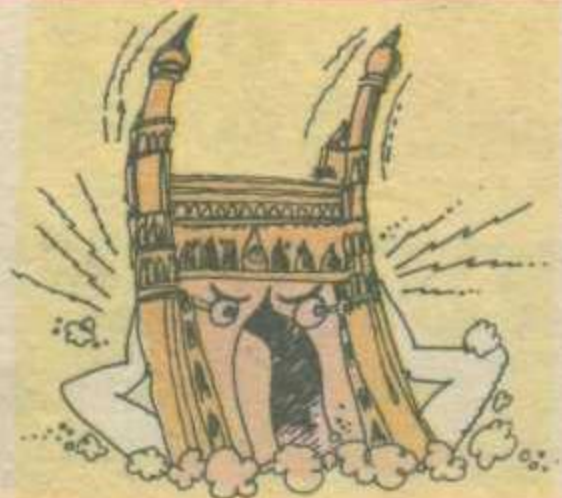


## WILL YOU BUY IT?

Have you read Bram Stoker's famous novel, *Dracula*? The character of Dracula was based on a feudal lord named Vlad who lived in Romania. His castle standing on a wind-swept cliff is for sale.

## SAD DAY FOR CHARMINAR

Who has not heard of or read about or seen the famous Charminar of Hyderabad? This 400-year old Qutub Sahi monument may not be the same charming attraction for long. Pollution and sound vibrations are endangering it, for it is at the centre of the old city.

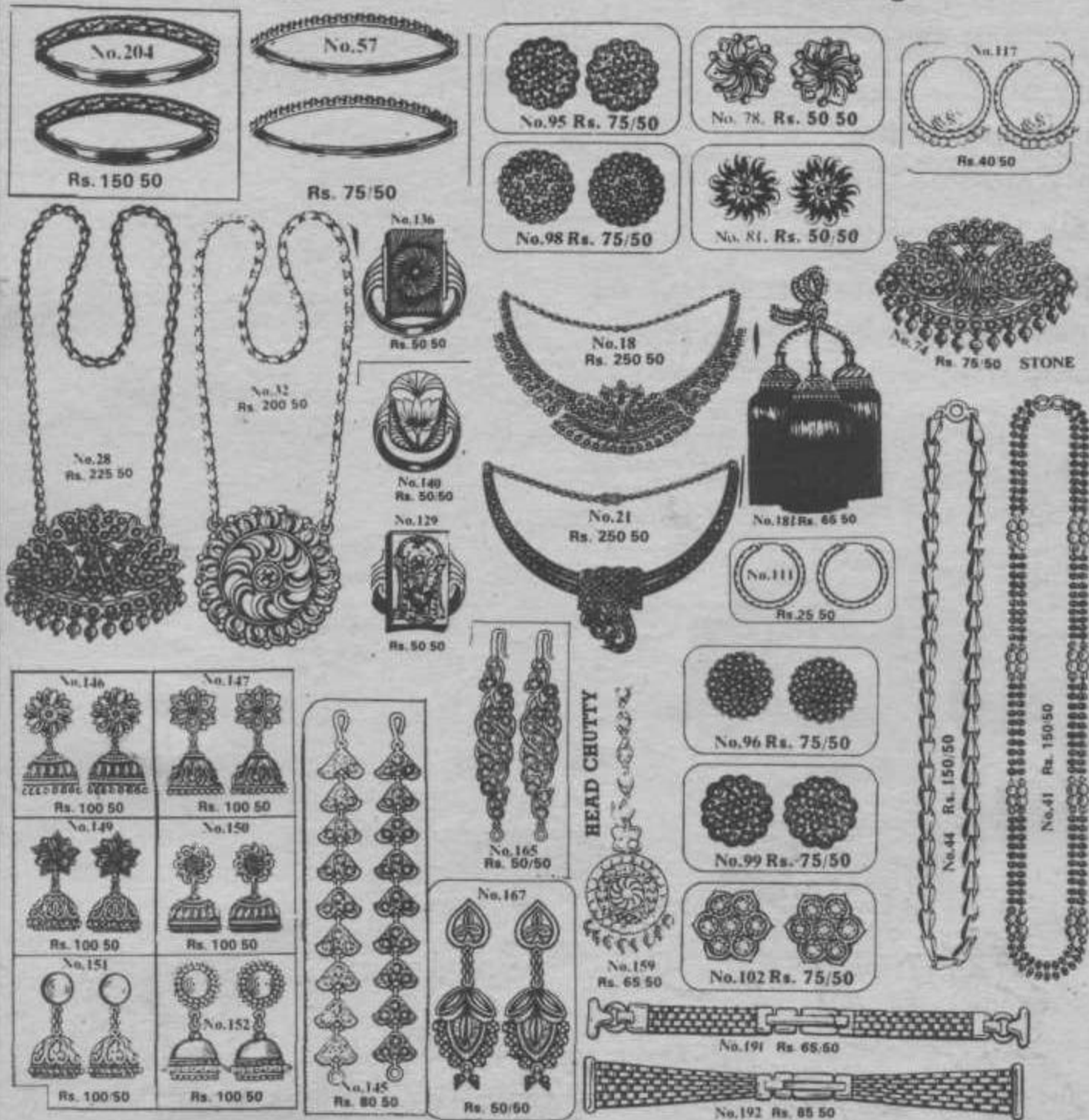




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## STORY OF

# RAMA



—By Manoj Das

*(The final battle between Rama and Ravana was marked by the death of Indrajit. Ravana, furious, planned to kill Sita, but was dissuaded from doing so by one of his ministers.)*

### END OF THE WAR

**R**avana summoned his remaining few heroic lieutenants and said in a voice that sounded like thunderclaps, "I shall brook no more delay. Those two brothers from Ayodhya are beating down over my kingdom like a pair of burning suns. They too must set as the sun sets. I

shall avenge the death of my son Indrajit and other dear generals. Soon all the creatures of my kingdom—the vultures and the crows and the rest—will be sumptuously fed with the flesh of our foes."

There was a new spell of enthusiasm in his camp. As the







echo of his roar died down, hundreds of demons raised their voices to announce their readiness to follow him to the battlefield.

And so they did. Ravana held in his grip a dangerous magic weapon. Like the leaping tongue of the monarch of serpents it would go and strike the object pointed to it. Ravana was looking for Rama. But as he could not take aim at him, he made Vibhishana his target. But Lakshmana harassed him and did not let him concentrate on his target even for a second. Angry like a volcano, Ravana roared at Lakshmana, "Very well, you ought to fall to this invincible

death-blow!"

Rama knew too well the deadly effect the magic weapon would produce if it hit its target. In the nick of time he uttered a hymn which reduced the ferocity of the leaping lance. Even then it threw Lakshmana on the ground.

"Sugriva! Hanuman! Be here with Lakshmana and give him all the help he needs. The time has come for me to act in a way I had never acted before. In a few moments the earth should be either without Ravana or without Rama!" said Rama with great emotion.

He, however, could not break himself away from his unconscious brother. He feared that the worst had happened and that Lakshmana was no more. He sat down beside him, despair and sorrow casting their shadow on his face.

Sushena, a Vanara Chief who was a physician, assured Rama that Lakshmana was not dead. He also instructed Hanuman to fetch the four herbs necessary for reviving Lakshmana. Hanuman proceeded to the distant hills, but unable to identify the herbs, broke an entire peak

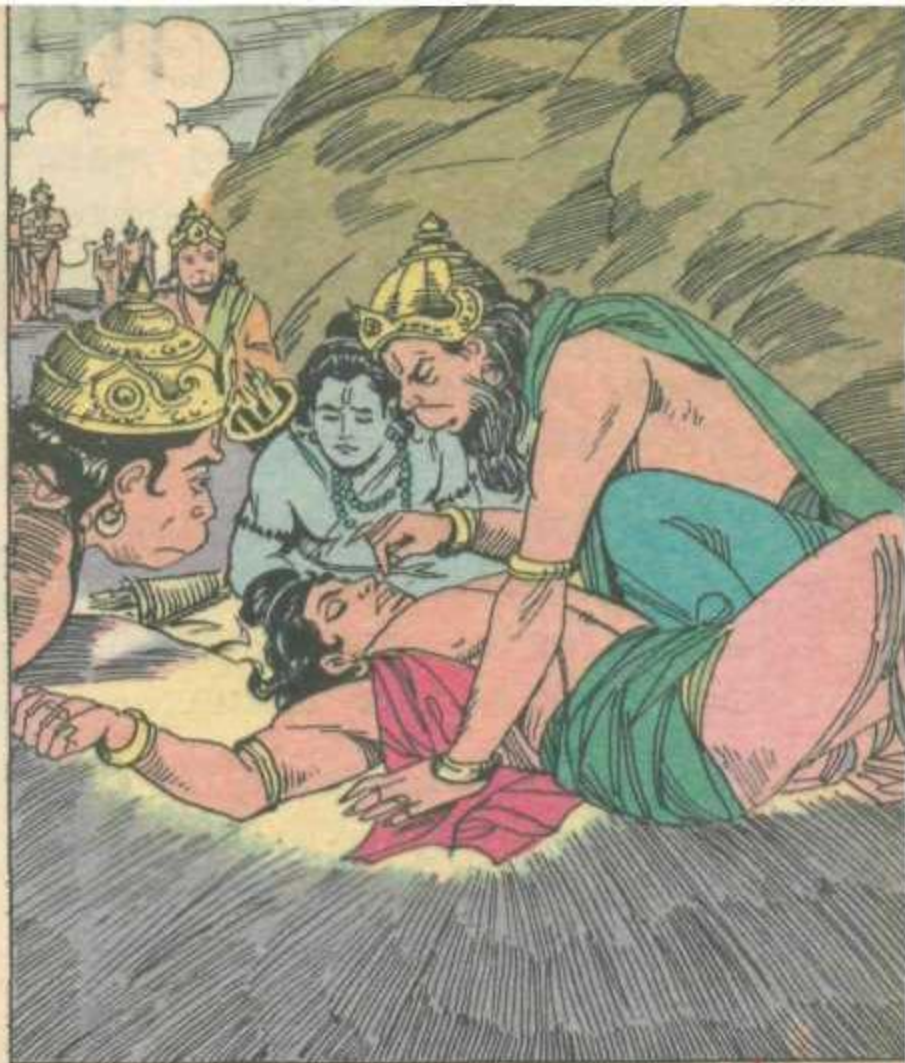


covered by beneficent plants and creepers and brought it to Rama's camp. Sushena spotted and plucked the herbs and, with their help, revived Lakshmana.

The very first reaction of Lakshmana was to take his elder brother to task, mildly though, for wasting his time worrying over him. "My brother, what even if I died? Should you forget the task before you? Finding you inactive the desperate Ravana must be destroying our soldiers with extra zeal. Must you allow him to do so? I wish you could do away with him before the sunset," said Lakshmana.

Rama smiled with joy at his brave younger brother's instant recovery. He returned to the battlefield without any further delay.

But he came on foot while Ravana confronted him riding his best chariot. "In this way it will be an unequal battle," thought the gods who witnessed the episode invisibly. Indra, their king, sent his own chariot and his charioteer, Matali, to Rama's aid. Rama was happy. He went round the chariot and then climbed it. Matali drove



the chariot closer to the demon-king.

Ravana at once despatched a bunch of fearful arrows. They not only clouded the visions of Rama and Matali, but also wounded the latter and damaged the chariot.

The jubilant demons raised slogans glorifying their king. The gods raised their voices wishing victory to Rama.

Rama stood on his chariot face to face with Ravana and said, "Kidnapping a lone, helpless woman is hardly the action of a hero. Only a shameless coward can do such a thing. Get ready to atone for it!"



Before Ravana could make any answer, Rama's arrows drove him to a corner of his chariot. His charioteer understood that he had swooned away. He retreated.

But Ravana, upon coming to senses, cursed the poor charioteer for his conduct. Soon he was back to face Rama.

Rama was prepared for this. He gave no chance to the enemy to attack him first. His arrow dazzled the demon-king's eyes and as he shut them, cut his head off.

A resounding laughter was heard the very next moment. Was it from the demon-king's toppled head? No, it was from a new head that had instantly cropped up on his neck!

Rama beheaded him again.

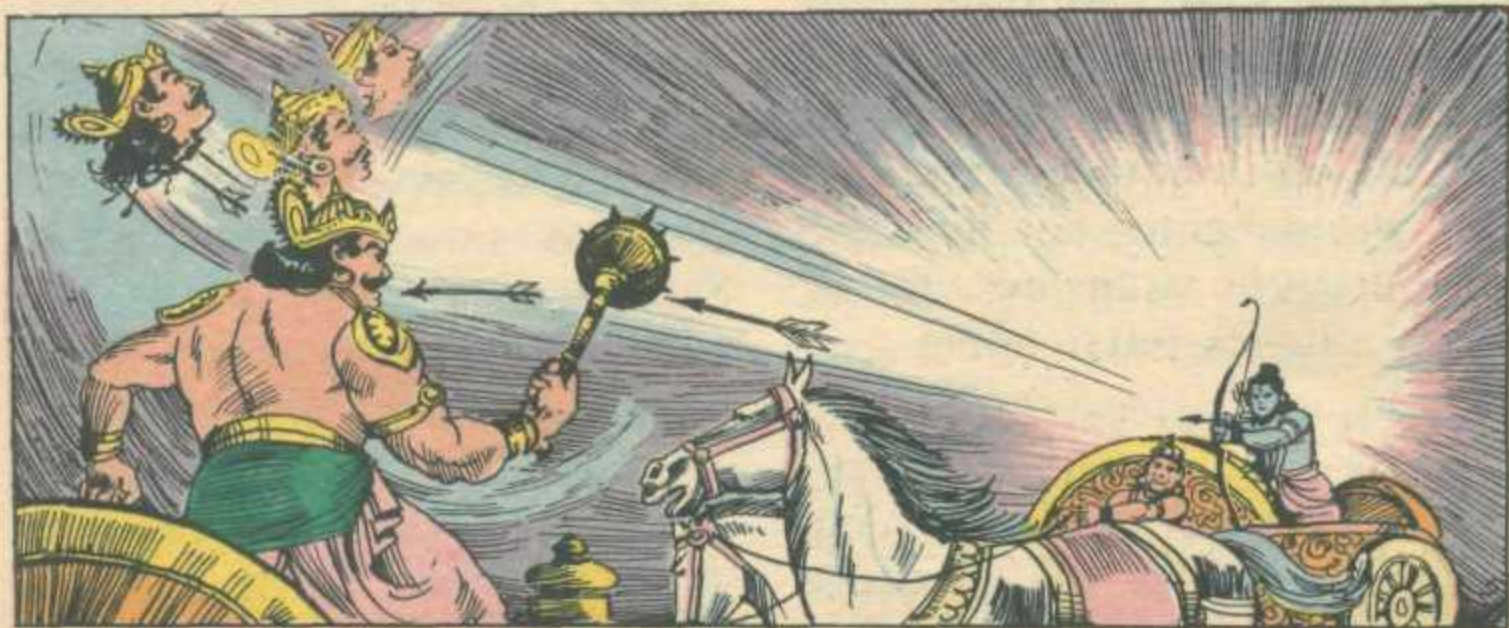
but he grew yet another new head. This happened a number of times.

"Rama, must I tell you that the formidable Ravana, the master of magic crafts, must be dealt only with the most powerful weapon at your command?" said Matali the charioteer.

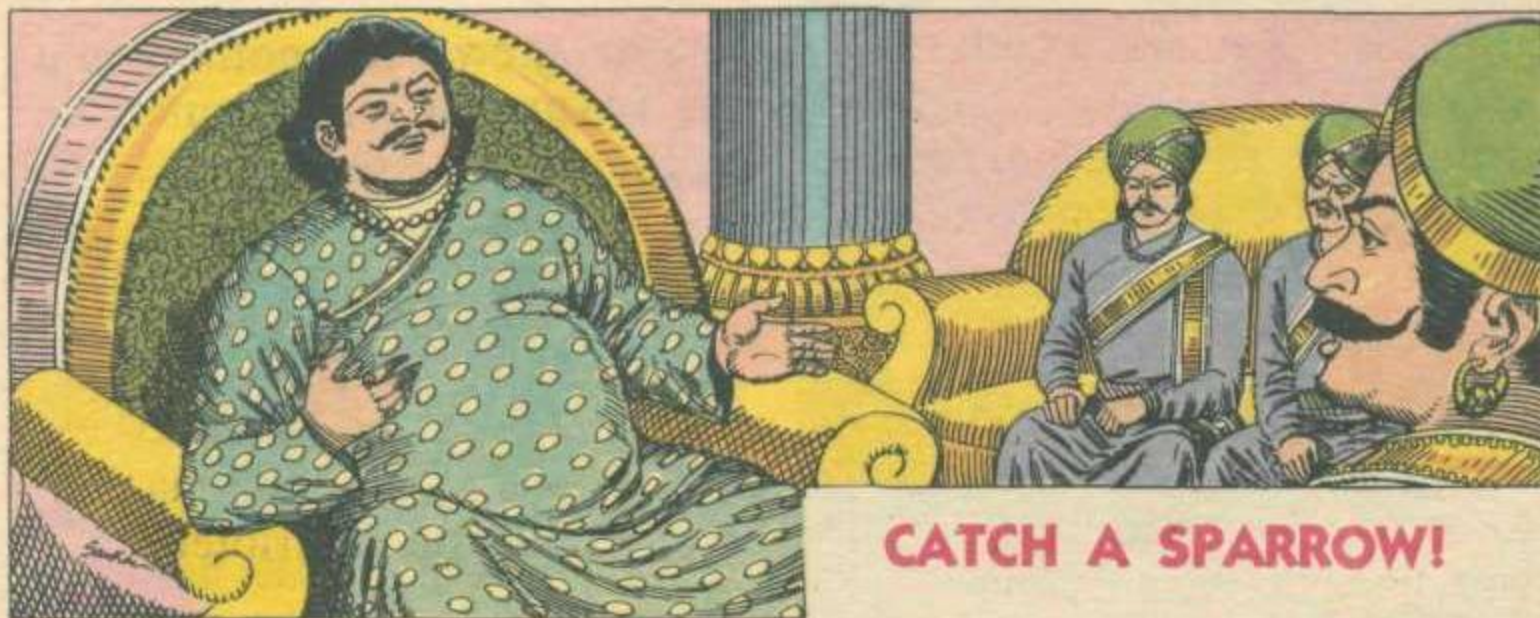
Rama remembered that he had at his disposal the great weapon, Brahmastra. He meditated on it. The mighty power, taking the form of a luminous shaft, appeared in his hand. There was no time to lose. He applied it on Ravana.

Ravana fell down with a terrific cry which surprised and silenced all the others in the battlefield. He was dead.

—To continue







## CATCH A SPARROW!

**V**ir Dev, the King of Devgarh, loved to pass his time in luxury. He loved good food and merriments. Luckily for him, there was no threat to his kingdom because his neighbourhood kings had good relations with Devgarh. He was not much bothered about his own administration because his ministers and officers were honest and efficient.

The king had a very affectionate brother-in-law who sent him different gifts from time to time, particularly silk shirts. Once he sent a very colourful kurta. The king was delighted and he put it on. But, as he struggled through it, its stitches burst open.

The king was surprised. His brother-in-law's tailor had his measurements. The fellow would not dare make a mistake.

How then did this happen?

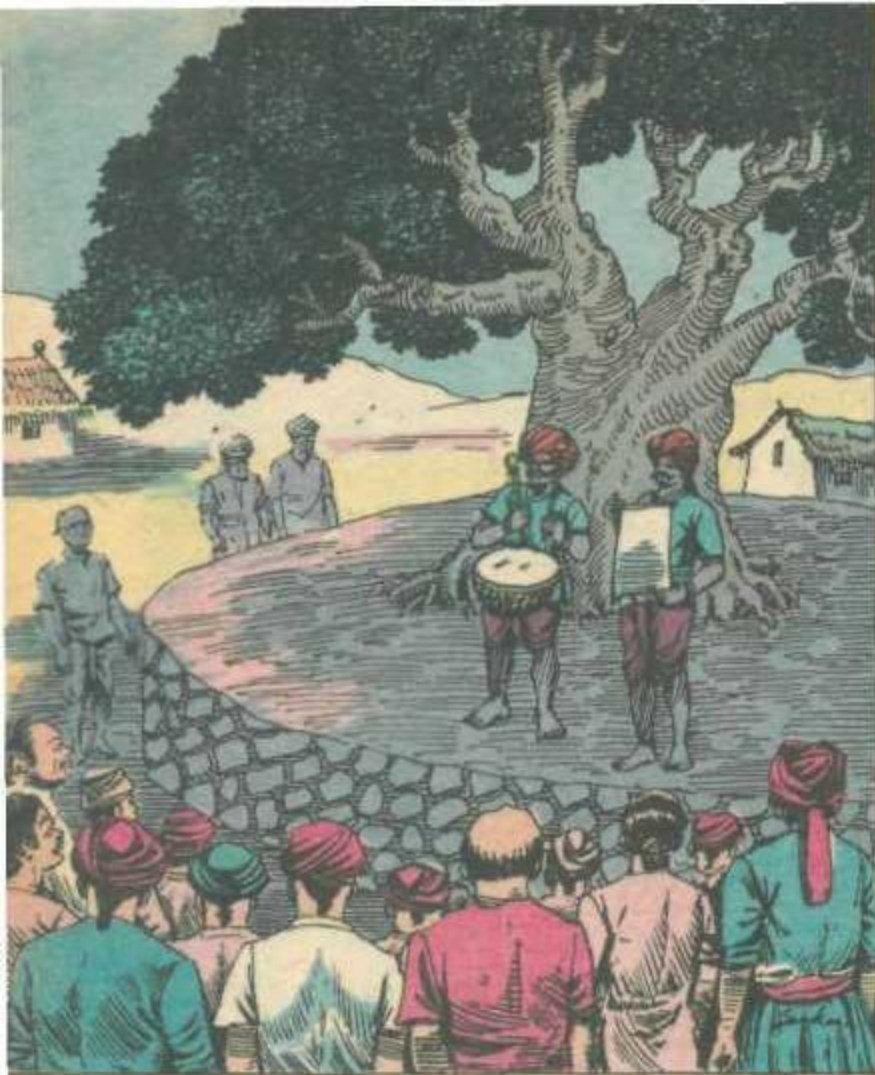
Suddenly the king became conscious of the fact that he had grown very fat. He now realised why for the past one year he was gasping for breath whenever he walked a little.

"Mantri," he called his minister, "Ask our physician to give me some medicine for slimming."

"As you please, Your Highness," said the minister. The physician gave a variety of medicines. If anything, they made the king grow fatter! For nobody dared to suggest to him that he simplify his dietary habit!

The king got very annoyed. "Put the physician behind the bars. And announce throughout the kingdom that anybody who can cure me of my obesity will





receive one fourth of our kingdom as his reward!"

The announcement was made. But the minister instructed the announcers to whisper to anyone who offered to take up the task that if he failed he shall be hanged! The minister did this because he was afraid of a possible rush of ambitious or greedy people who might give bad medicines to the king endangering his life.

Nobody came forward to treat the king.

At last a man who looked like a yogi met the minister and offered to treat the king, despite the risk involved.

The minister ushered him into the king's bed chamber. "I can begin giving medicines only after I have studied the king's horoscope," he said.

He was handed over the horoscope. He studied it for a while and then heaved a sigh.

Looking at the minister, he said, "I'm sorry, I will not treat the king."

"Why?" asked the minister and the king both equally surprised.

"Please don't ask me why," said the yogi.

That only enhanced the curiosity of the king and his minister. They insisted on knowing what the yogi had in his mind. Very reluctantly the yogi said, "The king is destined to die exactly after three months. What use wasting medicines on him?"

The king and the minister sat stunned for long. Then the minister asked, "Are you sure?"

"If you doubt my statement, you may take me prisoner. If the king survives the last day of the third month, hang me!" said the yogi.

The king was sure that what the yogi said was bound to



happen. He sat glum.

"Is there no way to ward off the danger?" asked the minister.

"Death can be delayed if the king succeeds in catching a sparrow barehanded during the three months. He must make the effort only for an hour every day."

"What will he do with the sparrow?" asked the minister.

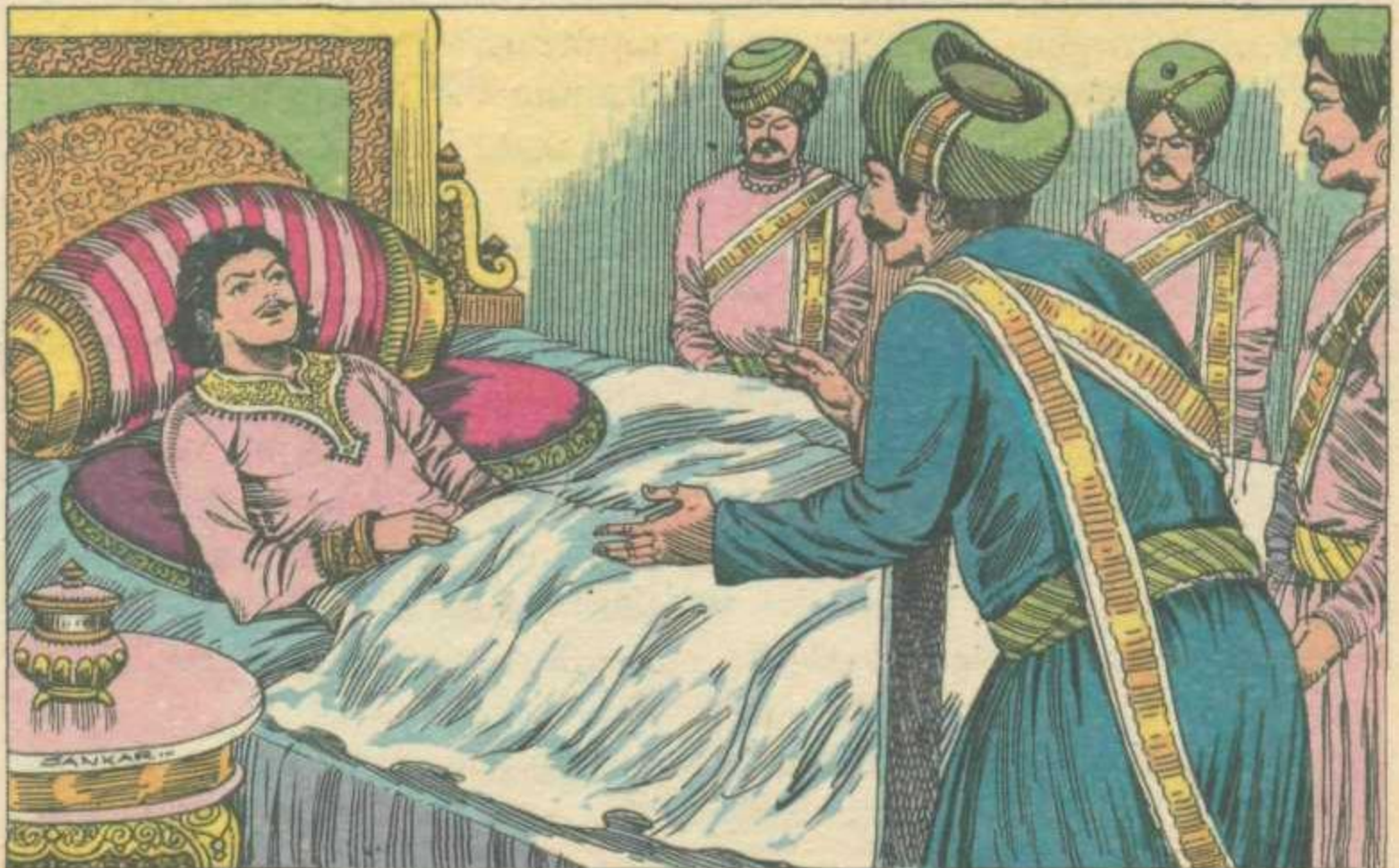
"He won't have to do anything. I will do whatever ritual is to be performed with the sparrow," said the yogi.

The yogi was detained in a suite in the palace. The king took to bed. He ate very little

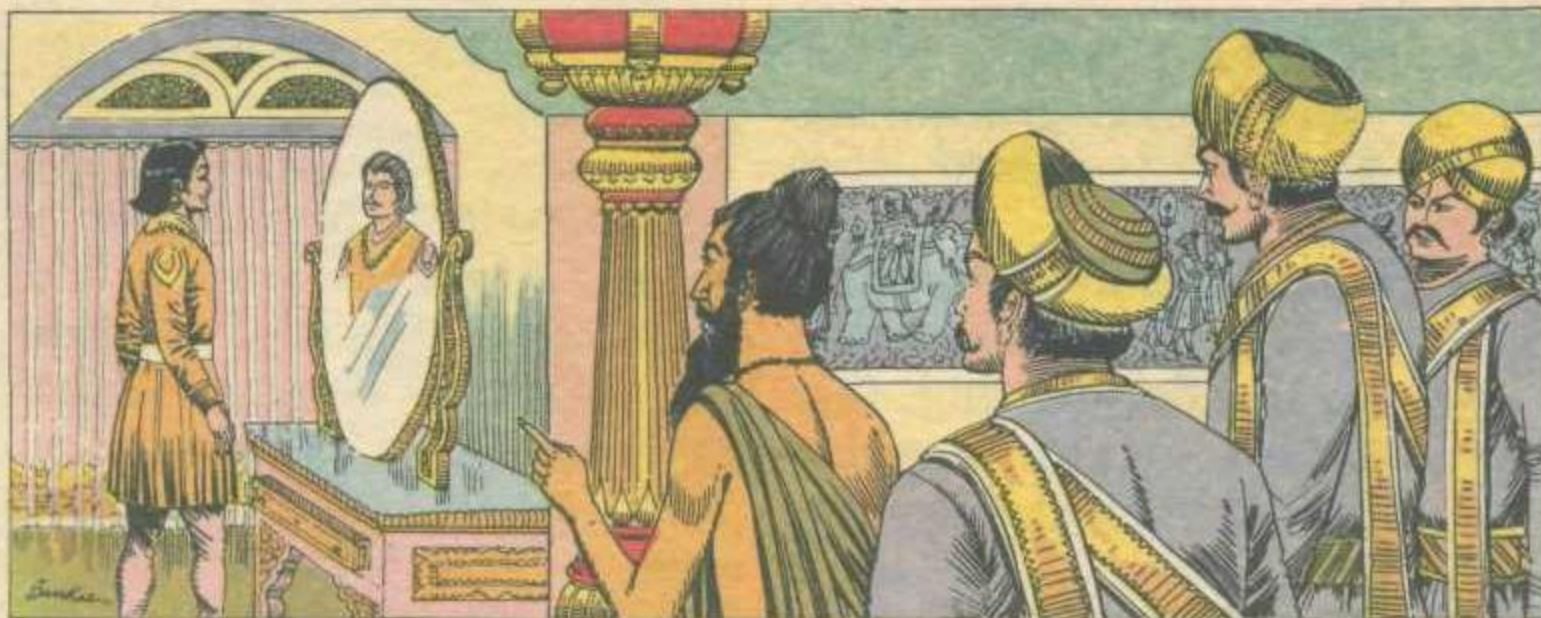
and went without sleep night after night.

A large number of sparrows descended in the royal garden at sunset. At the insistence of the minister the king tried to catch one of them. He ran behind them and tried to pounce on them, but his efforts went in vain.

Three months passed. The king had stopped talking during the last few days of that period. But when a full day passed after the period of three months and yet nothing happened, the king sprang out of his bed and rushed to the suite in which the yogi was detained and shouted,







“Come on, you liar, get ready to be hanged!”

“Hanged? But I was expecting my reward!”

“What do you mean?” demanded the agitated king.

“Your Majesty, whatever I did or said was a part of my treatment. Now, will you please look into a mirror and see yourself?” said the yogi.

The king calmed down. Slowly a smile bloomed on his face. He saw himself in a mirror. He had slimmed considerably.

Needless to say, the thought of death, his lack of interest in food and his sleeplessness, together with his running after the sparrows, had done the magic.

The king was ready to part with one-fourth of his kingdom. But the hermit only secured the physician's release and wanted nothing for himself.

He was found to be a childhood friend of the king. Both of them had been students at the same gurukul run by a sage.

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## FIRST AID:

# YOU TOO CAN LEARN IT

by Dr. R. Jagannath

**K**umud and her brother Vinod were returning from the beach with some of their school-mates. But they were not in the cheerful mood that was usual for the group during their Sunday outings. In fact, today they were quite gloomy and in no mood to talk. They had just witnessed an unfortunate incident. A young boy had drowned

in the sea; someone had pulled him out of the water, but in the anxious and excited crowd around the boy, no one seemed to know how to help him. After a while the ambulance came and took the limp figure away, but Kumud wondered whether it was not already too late.

Reaching home, Vinod and Kumud found their Uncle Ram







sitting in the drawing room. They ran to greet him. Uncle Ram was a doctor in the army and had come on leave. Kumud rightaway started to pour out her frustration to her uncle.

"Oh uncle, I wish you had been with us at the beach today. A boy drowned in the sea and even after he was brought out of the water we were standing so helplessly. I wish I were a doctor like you. Uncle, was there anything I could have done to help him?"

Uncle Ram hugged Vinod and Kumud and said in a comforting tone, "Perhaps you could have been of some help if

you knew how to give first aid."

Vinod was quick to ask, "What is first aid, uncle?" and Uncle Ram replied, "When someone is injured or seriously ill, it may take some time for a doctor to arrive on the spot or for the patient to be taken to the hospital. In the meanwhile it may be possible by certain simple acts to keep the person alive, make him more comfortable and prevent further damage. This kind of assistance given on the spot by someone available nearby is called first aid."

Vinod and Kumud were impressed, though Kumud was a little doubtful: "But uncle, won't it take a long and thorough training? Can we learn it?"

"Yes, certainly you can," replied Uncle Ram. "Anyone who is interested enough can learn to give first aid. In fact, I am surprised that they do not teach it in all the schools. Of course, one becomes good at it only through practice and by seeing an expert do it. But if someone has learnt the basic principles well and has a clear idea of what he should and should not do, he will be definitely of some help."



even if he is not an expert yet. And the basic principles are not difficult to learn."

Vinod held the doctor's arm and tugged at it. "Uncle, you will be here for some weeks; please teach us something about first aid."

Kumud too chimed in, "Yes uncle, do teach us. And why don't we start today, since we are free?"

Uncle settled back on the sofa, with an arm around Kumud sitting by his side, while Vinod leaned on his lap, both the children eager and attentive.

Uncle Ram began by asking Vinod and Kumud, "Can you tell me from what I have already said, what are the aims in giving first aid?"

The children vied with each other to answer, "To save life."

"Certainly", agreed Uncle, "That is the primary aim of first aid. Then?"

"To make the victim comfortable," said Kumud.

"Yes, we must aim to relieve him of pain and fear as far as possible, and make him comfortable. Do you remember the third aim I mentioned?" asked Uncle Ram.



After a little thought, Vinod asked, "Is it to prevent damage, Uncle?" "Right," said Uncle. "We must try to prevent further harm while the victim is being carried to the hospital or while waiting for expert help to arrive, and thus minimise the damage."

"Now that we know the aims of first aid, let us see what a first-aider should keep in mind. He should be clear about what he is doing and know his limits. Because if in his enthusiasm to help, he takes steps without understanding what he is doing, or goes beyond what he has learnt to do, he may cause more harm to the victim. He should



keep a cool and calm attitude even when he has to act swiftly. Then he is less likely to commit big mistakes and also this will make the victim feel more reassured."

Uncle Ram continued: "The first-aider should as soon as possible send word to the doctor, ambulance, fire-brigade or police, as necessary. He should firmly but politely, clear away onlookers who may crowd around out of curiosity, so that the victim will have more fresh air; however, if he finds suitable persons in the crowd, he may take their help when needed. Sometimes, when the victim is still in a place exposed to further danger, it may be necessary to move him quickly to a safer place before starting the first aid. And once the most urgent part of the first aid has been

given, the first-aider should reassure the victim, find out his name and address, and if possible send word to his home."

Uncle Ram paused and looked at the children. "Ah, you look hungry", he said. "In the next session, we shall see what are the things a first-aider has to check and do step by step, when he comes across a casualty. In the meanwhile, here is a book for you with pictures. As we go along, I will explain to you how to give first aid with the help of these pictures."

The children started to get up for dinner. Though they were hungry, their minds were full of images of being helpful to those in distress.

*To Continue*





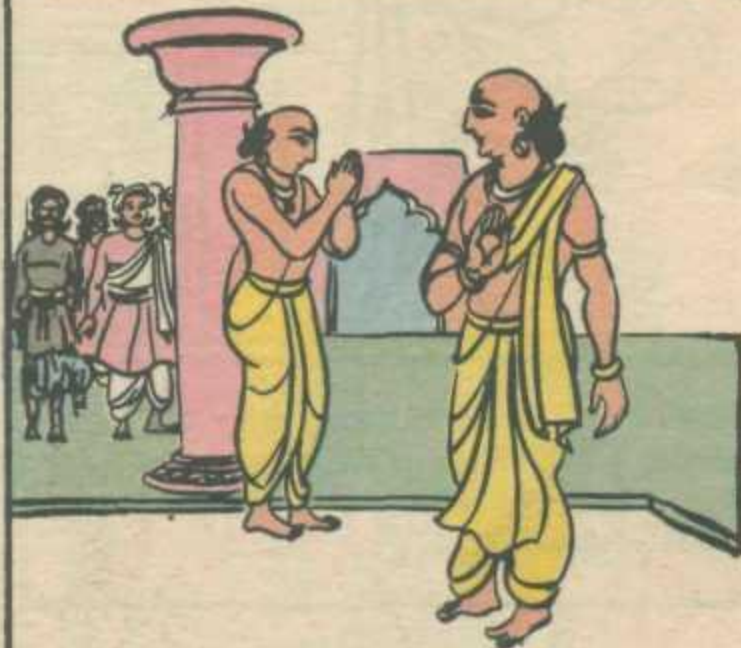
## WHAT IS EATING?

Tenali Raman, looking for a job, paid a visit to the court of the local Raja. A famous scholar was lecturing to the court, "All is Maya!"



"What about eating, sir?" asked Raman. "You're stupid," said the scholar. All laughed at Raman. "All is Illusion. You think that you eat. But what is it really? The food was at one place; it is gone to another," said the scholar and all applauded him.

"We're lucky with your visit, O Pundit," said the Raja, touching the scholar's feet. The scholar blessed him. Tenali Raman observed this.



Outside the court Tenali Raman greeted the scholar and said, "Master, I propose to throw a banquet in your honour, at the Dharmasala. Only the nobility will be there!"



The scholar was very happy. In time he arrived at the Dharmasala. Tenali Raman heaped on him praises and offered him a chair.



Delicious items of food were offered to the guests who partook of them, sitting cross-legged, on the floor. The scholar only looked on.

When all the guests left and the scholar was still not asked to take food, he got annoyed. "When am I to eat?" he demanded of Tenali Raman.



"Eat? You? Are you joking with me, sir?" asked Tenali Raman feigning great surprise. "I never thought of offering you food!" he added.





"Go to hell!" shouted the Brahmin and forthwith he went to the Raja's court and complained that Tenali Raman had insulted him. The Raja sent for Tenali Raman.



"My Lord, what is eating for this scholar? Food is at one place and it will go to another place. That is all! How can I be so stupid as to ask this great man by asking him to indulge in Maya?" explained Tenali Raman.

All burst into laughter at Tenali Raman's statement. The scholar hung his head in shame. "All right, all right," said the king. "Philosophy has its place and food also has its place."



After the scholar left the court, the Raja appointed Tenali Raman as his court jester, by rewarding him with a gold ring and a shawl.





## MONUMENTS OF INDIA

### THE HILL TEMPLE AT PALANI

At an elevation of 1500 feet, on the Sivagiri hill in Tamil Nadu, is situated the shrine for a very ancient deity, Lord Dandayudhapani. Popularly known as Muruga, he is Kumara or Kartikeya, the son of Lord Siva. He holds a *Danda* or staff in his hand.

Sivagiri is a solitary hill amidst fields and villages and rivers, from where one can see the hills of Kodaikanal, Idumban and the Western Ghats forming a charming landscape.

The idol is unique in the world for the materials which have gone into its making. They are nine kinds of medicinal minerals, combined according to a rare formula so that the stuff is as hard as rock. Water is poured on the deity for hundreds of times everyday and this has gone on for centuries. But the idol has withstood the treatment. The water that is used on the idol is believed to have excellent curative value for diseases. Legend says that Sage Agastya wanted to carry two hills, Sivagiri and Sakthigiri, to South. Idumban carried them slung from a pole on his shoulders. For taking a little rest he placed the *Kavadi*, as such poles with scales are known, at the present site. Meanwhile Muruga sat on the Sivagiri hill. As a result, Idumban could not lift it again.

Following this legend many devotees come to the Lord carrying *Kavadis*.

The shrine attracts large number of devotees throughout the year. There is an electrically operated carriage service to the hill-top.







A folktale from Turkey  
**THE IMPOSTER**

Once upon a time there was a poor man named Babar in a certain town in Turkey. He was young and able-bodied. His well-to-do neighbours offered him jobs in their shops or households. But if Babar took up any work, it was for a short time. He thought the benefits he received too small for his merit. He would rather pass his time begging than working for a livelihood.

One day he was idling away his time leaning against the wall of a public bath when he saw a nobleman entering the house. He was surprised to see that the nobleman totally resembled him—as if the two were twins! He peeped in and saw the nobleman being received by the staff of the bath with a show of great honour.

Babar kept gazing at the nobleman for long. "Only if I could step into his position!" he thought. Then he did something unexpected. He saw that all the workers of the bath were busy cleaning the bathing pool, leaving the nobleman alone. Babar went in and told him, "Don't I look like you?"

"Indeed, you do," said the nobleman looking amazed.

"Do you want to know the mystery? Come with me," he said. Babar then led the nobleman to a corner of the hall where there was a pit. He pushed the nobleman into it and shut its mouth with a slab of stone.

Soon the staff of the house came to prepare the nobleman for his bath. They easily mistook Babar to be the nobleman





and gave him a massage with oil. He finished taking bath. His own servants who were waiting in an outer chamber came in with costly clothes. He put them on. The servants then gave him the purse. He paid the staff generously and came out of the house.

"Mount your horse, sir! We will follow you!" said the servant.

Babar was in a difficult situation. He had never mounted a horse. However, he managed to climb it and the horse started strutting towards its master's house of its own accord.

The horse stopped in front of

a palatial house. Guards at the door saluted him and took hold of the horse. He was ushered into a room. "My lord, will you like to have your lunch alone? Or, should our mistress join you?" asked a maid-servant.

"I'll eat alone," said Babar.

"As you please," said the maid-servant and she clapped her hands. Six maids brought delicious dishes and arranged them before him. Babar ate them, but he could not enjoy them. He was wondering what will happen next. He was in the grip of panic.

No sooner had he finished eating than a beautiful lady en-





tered his room and greeted him with a loving smile. "My lord, why do you wish to be left alone? Why are you looking so pensive?" she asked.

Babar took his eyes away. He coughed and hemmed but could say nothing.

"By the way, my lord, only this morning a childhood friend of mine wanted to know your full name. Imagine my embarrassment when I could not answer her. I have been calling you as my lord! Now, will you please tell me what is your name?"

Babar kept quiet.

She cast a steady look at him.

"Yes, what is your name?" she repeated her question.

Babar felt as if a knife was pierced in his heart. He broke down and said, "I'm only poor Babar, not the master of this house!" Then he confessed to his mischief and said, "Please pardon me!"

"I can pardon you provided my husband is safe. I will send for him now. But what about the Caliph? Here comes the messenger from him. My husband was to discuss philosophy with him," said the lady.

"What should I do?"

"Go with the messenger. You will find two thrones in the





Caliph's chamber arranged face to face. One is studded with diamonds, the other with gold. Occupy the diamond studded throne and wait for the Caliph."

The messenger came in. Babar followed him without a word, but his heart beating faster than ever. As advised by the lady, he sat down on the diamond-studded throne.

Soon the Caliph entered the room. "How dare you insult me by sitting on my throne?" he shouted. His bodyguards rushed in. "Behead this imposter!" he said. The guards unsheathed their swords.

Babar gave out a shriek of horror.

His dream ended. He thanked his fate that all this was not true! He had thought of stepping into the nobleman's posi-

tion when he dozed off.

He saw the nobleman coming out of the bath. He greeted him. The nobleman smiled at him and observed, "How strange, you look like me!"

Babar said nothing, but smiled sadly.

"What do you do?" asked the nobleman.

"I am a poor man—without any work, sir!"

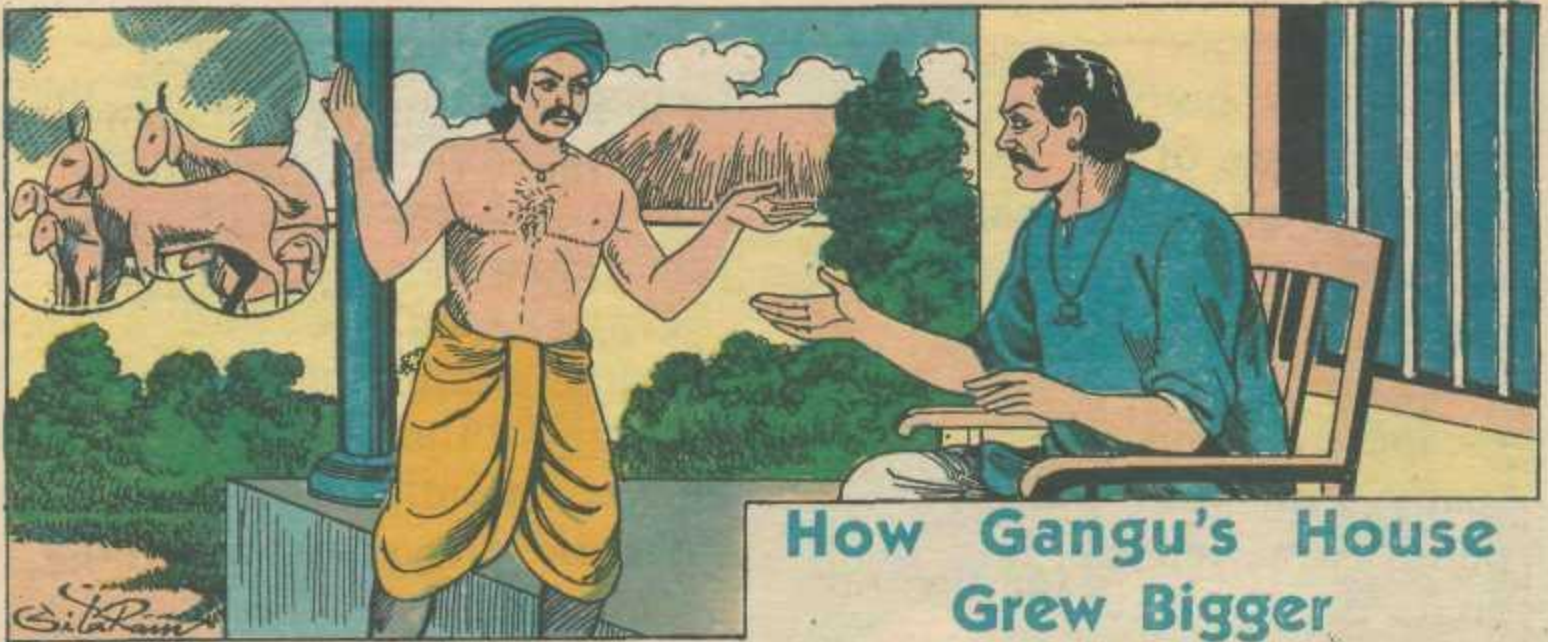
"I see. Will you like to work under me?" asked the nobleman.

"Happily, my lord," said Babar.

The fearful dream had removed from his mind his idle wish to step into someone's position. He was now ready to work and be himself.







## How Gangu's House Grew Bigger

**B**hisham Das was a man known for his wisdom. While some people thought that he was a sage, some others thought that he knew some secret by which he could solve all sorts of problems.

People generally came to him to consult about disputes they had over some property, about diseases they suffered from or about doubts they had on some religious or philosophical problem. Nobody ever came to him with as strange a problem as Ganguram presented before him.

"Sir, we are six people in my family. But the house we live in is small. What to do?" asked Ganguram.

"You have to build a bigger house!" suggested Bhisham Das.

"I have no money for that,"

replied Ganguram.

"I see. How do you expect me to help you?" asked Bhisham Das.

"I know that you are gifted with magic powers. Can't you expand my house just a little?" Bhisham Das laughed. "If you wish me to apply my magic powers, I can do that. But you must follow certain rituals for that," said he.

"I'll do anything you ask me to do."

"How many cows do you have?" asked Bhisham Das.

"Two."

"Now, transfer them from the shed into your house. Meet me after a month," said Bhisham Das.

Ganguram went away happily.

A month later he came back, looking rather unhappy.



"Sir, my house was already small for six of us. Now, with two cows added, it makes very difficult for us to live in it!" he complained.

"I know. But there is no escape from this process if you really wish your house to expand. Now, tell me, how many goats do you have?"

"Well, sir, at the moment there are two goats and three kids."

"Good. Now begins the second phase of the ritual. Lead them into your house and forget about it. Meet me after two months," said Bhisham Das.

Ganguram went away, but

feeling apprehensive about the prescription. Bhisham Das smiled and gave his attention to other matters.

Ganguram peeped into Bhisham's house after a month.

"Gangu, I asked you to come here only after two months! Why did you come now?"

Ganguram scratched his head and went away.

He returned after another month.

"Come on, Gangu, now, just at the time of the sunset remove all your beasts to their shed. Remove the furniture in the house. Clean it. Then sprinkle this water all over the house. In







the morning, open all the windows and doors. Let the sunlight flood the house. You will see that the house has expanded."

Ganguram went away. Next day, beaming with joy, he reported to Bhisham Das that the miracle had taken place. The house had expanded!

Bhisham's own servant who heard Ganguram exclaim this, asked his master, after Ganguram's departure, "Sir, how could you do it?"

Bhisham laughed. "You see, many of our problems are relative. Gangu should have understood that unless he can construct a bigger house, he has to remain satisfied with the house as it is. But that is a different matter. What I did was simple. I made him taste what is real congestion. In relation to that bad experience over three months, the clean house now looks enlarged!"

Bhisham laughed again and added, "Of course, Gangu is a simpleton."

Greatness lies not in being strong, but in the right use of strength.

—Henry Ward Beecher



# WORLD OF SPORT



THE AMERICA'S CUP WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED THE **ONE HUNDRED GUINEA CUP**. IT BECAME KNOWN AS THE AMERICA'S CUP AFTER IT WAS WON BY THE SCHOONER 'AMERICA' IN **1851**. IT WAS LATER OFFERED BY THE NEW YORK YACHT CLUB AS A CHALLENGE TROPHY AND HAS NEVER YET BEEN LOST



## First Monaco Grand Prix



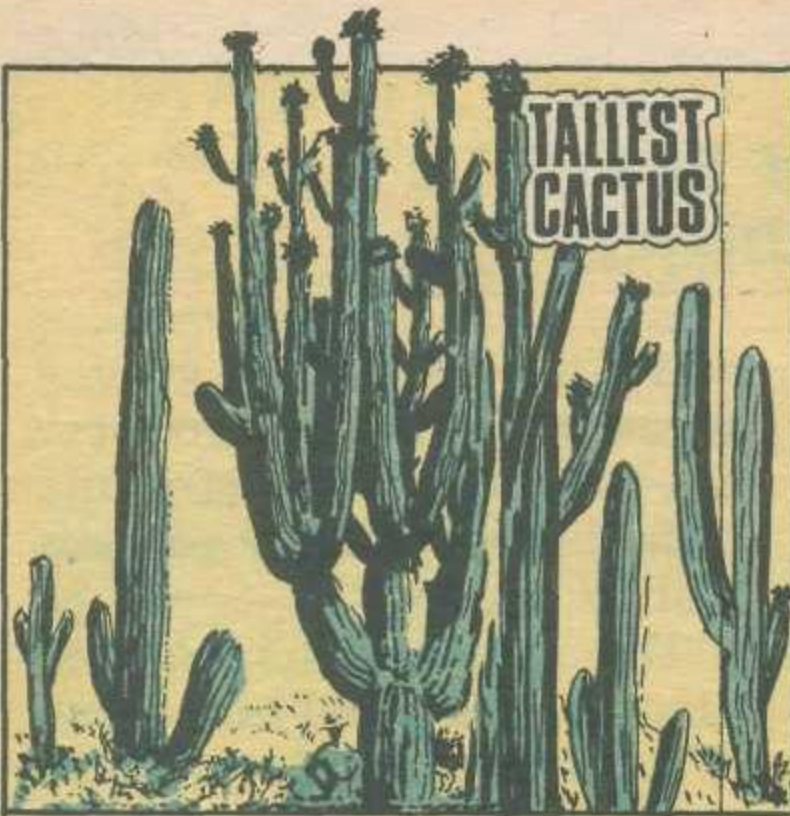
THE **FIRST** MONACO GRAND PRIX WAS HELD IN **1929** AND WAS WON BY W. WILLIAMS DRIVING A BUGATTI AT 49.83 MPH.

## A GOAL-A-GAME



THE MOST PROLIFIC GOAL SCORER IN BRITISH FOOTBALL WAS **JIMMY McCRORY** (GLASGOW-CELTIC 1922-38) WHO IN 408 LEAGUE MATCHES SCORED **410 GOALS**.





**TALLEST  
CACTUS**

THE **SAGUARO** IS THE TALLEST OF ALL CACTI. AFTER **200 YEARS** IT FINALLY REACHES A HEIGHT OF 40-50FT. (12-15.2M) AND WEIGHS ABOUT 10 TONNES, BUT FOUR FIFTHS OF THIS IS **WATER**.

CRATER LAKE, OREGON, USA, IS REALLY THE REMAINS OF A PREHISTORIC VOLCANIC CRATER, 10KM (6.21MS) WIDE. IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS CRATER IS **ANOTHER VOLCANIC CONE**.

## *Volcano within a volcano*



## **DEATH CAP**



THE MOST POISONOUS OF ALL FUNGI IS THE **DEATH CAP** (AMANITA PHALLOIDES). IT IS ABOUT THE SAME SIZE AS A FIELD MUSHROOM BUT ITS EFFECTS ON HUMANS RESEMBLES **CHOLERA**.



A folktale from Sri Lanka

## THE ART OF EATING A SHADOW

A great scholar visited the royal court. His followers claimed that no feat on earth was impossible for him to accomplish. So much power he had acquired from his studies!

There was none in the whole kingdom to challenge him. In fact, all other scholars would shiver before him.

The king felt sad that his own scholars were no match for a stranger. His courtiers shared his anguish.

But not Andare, the court-jester!

One day Andare casually

asked the scholar: "If nothing on earth is impossible for you, Sir, I believe you will have little difficulty in eating a pancake and its shadow!"

The great scholar blinked. "Eat a pancake and its shadow! What nonsense do you speak!

"Only one who eats knows that it is no nonsense, but very tasteful!" said Andare.

"Are you mad?" blurted out the scholar.

"No. Not yet..." calmly said Andare.

"You speak foolishly! No one under the sun will be able to do such a thing," observed the





scholar.

"But I can do it, right under the sun!"

"Can you?"

"I can, on condition that you publicly touch my feet after I have done it!" said Andare.

The entire court kept looking at the scholar to see how he responds to Andare's challenge. The scholar looked uncertain for a moment, but then said, "Very well, let's see you perform it!"

It was decided that Andare will perform the feat the next day.

It was a bright day. The king, the scholar and the courtiers followed Andare to the palace terrace. A delicious pancake was brought from the royal kitchen.

Andare's shadow fell on the floor. Andare took the pancake in his hand and told them, "Now

look alternately at me and my shadow."

As everyone looked at Andare and his shadow, he began to eat the pancake. Andare's shadow looked like eating the pancake's shadow.

"Don't you see, Your Highness, how I eat the pancake here and its shadow there?" asked Andare his mouth still filled with a big bite.

Suddenly all burst out laughing. And, nobody noticed when the great scholar had sneaked away.

"But he forgot to touch my feet!" complained Andare. A messenger was sent to fetch the scholar. But he had already left the royal guest house.

"That is better than his touching your feet," said the happy king.

—Retold by P. Raja.





## GIFT FROM A GREAT SOUL

Mohan was a well-to-do farmer, but in his own locality he was better known as Mohan the Miser!

The harvest season was over. It was time for the farmers to bring home the stacks of paddy. Children of poor people loitered around the fields with the hope of getting as alms the scattered grain loosened from the stacks. The farmers did not disappoint them. They thought it a pious deed to give them small quantities of grain.

Mohan too was in his field and he was ready to leave for home. There were porters to carry his paddy. But while the poor boys went to all the other farmers, none came to him. They knew Mohan's nature.

Mohan desired that he too should be looked upon as a man of charity. He decided to show that he could be more generous than the others. He set apart some paddy and mixed an equal quantity of husk with it. Then he called some boys and filled their bags with the stuff.

One of his neighbours became curious. He called the boys and looked into their bags and smiled. He then gave them some advice.

When Mohan was back home, his wife told him, "Look at that heap of grain. A certain great soul gave it free to some village urchins. I bought it off them at half the market price."

Mohan recognised his gift!





## THE POWER OF CURSE

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of breeze whistled through the nearby forests. At the intervals of thunderclaps and moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, no sooner had he begun crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, than the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, what do you hope to achieve out of the pains you are taking at this unearthly hour? Do you wish to muster some supernatural powers? But you should know that supernatural powers do not prove effective on every occasion. Let me cite







an example before you. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief.”

The vampire went on: “You surely know about gundharvas. They are supernatural beings with great powers. Once a gundharva named Chitravarna paid a visit to this world of man. As he flew over mountains and valleys and forests, he was very happy with the natural splendours of the earth.

He descended on a marble slab in a garden with a lake inside it. It was evening. Swans played in the lake and a group of young ladies laughed and sang on its bank.

Chitravarna felt charmed. Among the ladies was one who was extremely beautiful, like the moon amidst the stars.

As soon as a gundharva touches the earth he becomes visible.

The ladies stopped laughing and singing as their eyes fell on a stranger. Chitravarna went closer to them and asked them, pointing his finger at the one who was the most beautiful, “Who is she?”

“She is Princess Priyadarshini, the daughter of King Chandravir. We are her maids. This royal garden is not open to public or strangers. Who are you? How could you gain entry into it?” asked the chief maid of the princess.

Chitravarna did not care to answer her. Instead, kept gazing at the princess and said, as if to himself, “What an enchanting beauty. She ought to marry me, a gundharva!”

Suddenly he took a step forward and caught hold of the princess and tried to drag her away.

The princess and her maids shouted for help. A royal guard who heard their cry came run-





ning and unsheathed his sword.

Chitravarna laughed. "You fool, I'm a gundharva. What do you know of my powers? My curse can paralyse you!" he said scoffingly.

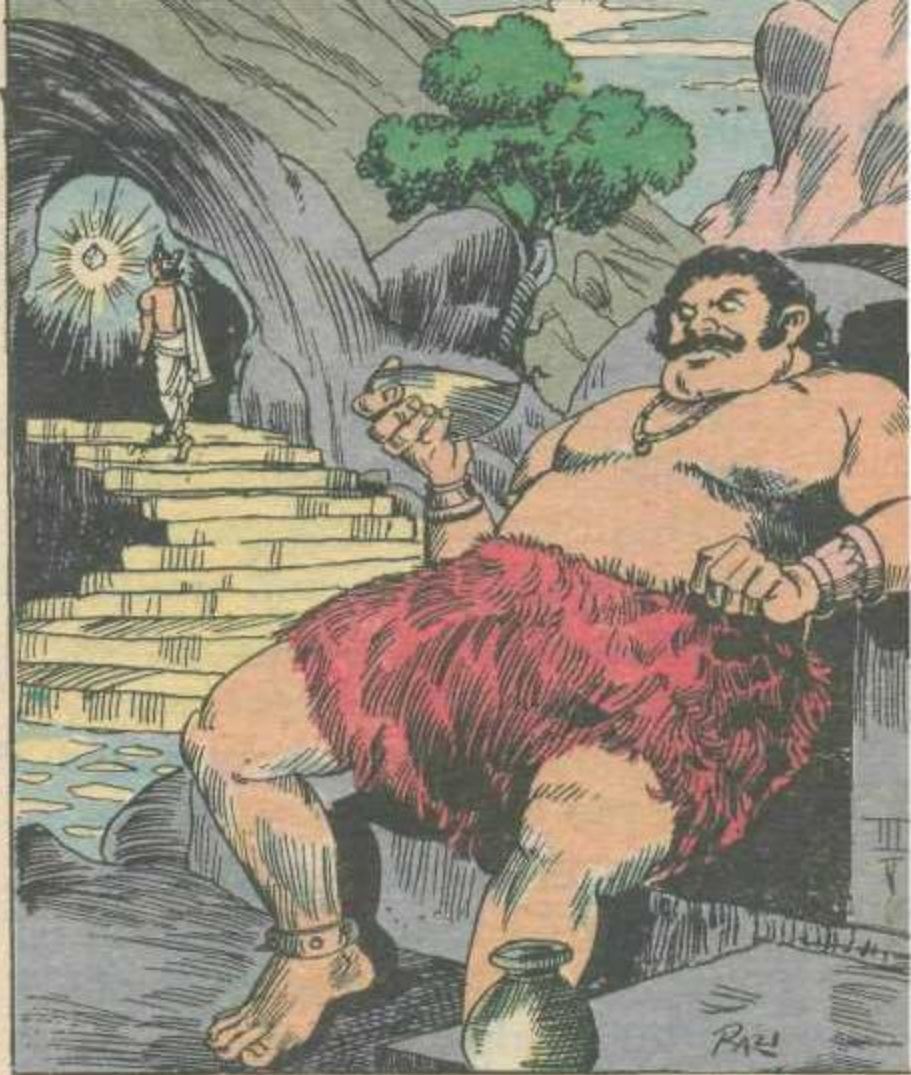
"It is my duty to protect the princess. I must do my duty even if that costs me my life!" said the guard and he added, "I say, release her arm from your grip!"

As Chitravarna did not give up, the guard raised his sword to strike him with it.

"Let my curse paralyse you!" shouted the gundharva. But nothing happened to the guard. His sword was about to fall on the gundharva when he let go the princess and himself disappeared.

The gundharva was surprised that his curse did not materialise. However, he forgot all about it very soon and flew invisibly, enjoying the scenery below.

He descended on a knoll in a forest and became visible again. He felt curious about a bluish hue emanating from a cave. He peeped into it and saw a wonderful jewel lying at the farthest end of the cave. "This should



make an excellent gift for the king of gundharvas," he thought and stepped into the cave.

"Who is that entering my cave?" demanded a giant who sat relaxing in front of the cave.

"I'm a gundharva. I must have that jewel."

The giant laughed. "Have that jewel, eh? Are you not ashamed of coveting someone else's property? I received that from a serpent-prince because of my devoted service to him. How dare you grab it, you thief?" said the giant angrily.

"Mind your tongue, you foolish giant. How do you forget that you are talking to a gun-





dhharva?" asked Chitravarna haughtily. He proceeded to pick up the jewel.

The giant stood up and rushed upon him. The gundharva stopped and cursed him saying, "Change into a rock!"

There was no change in the giant. He laughed and tried to capture Chitravarna. However, the gundharva disappeared.

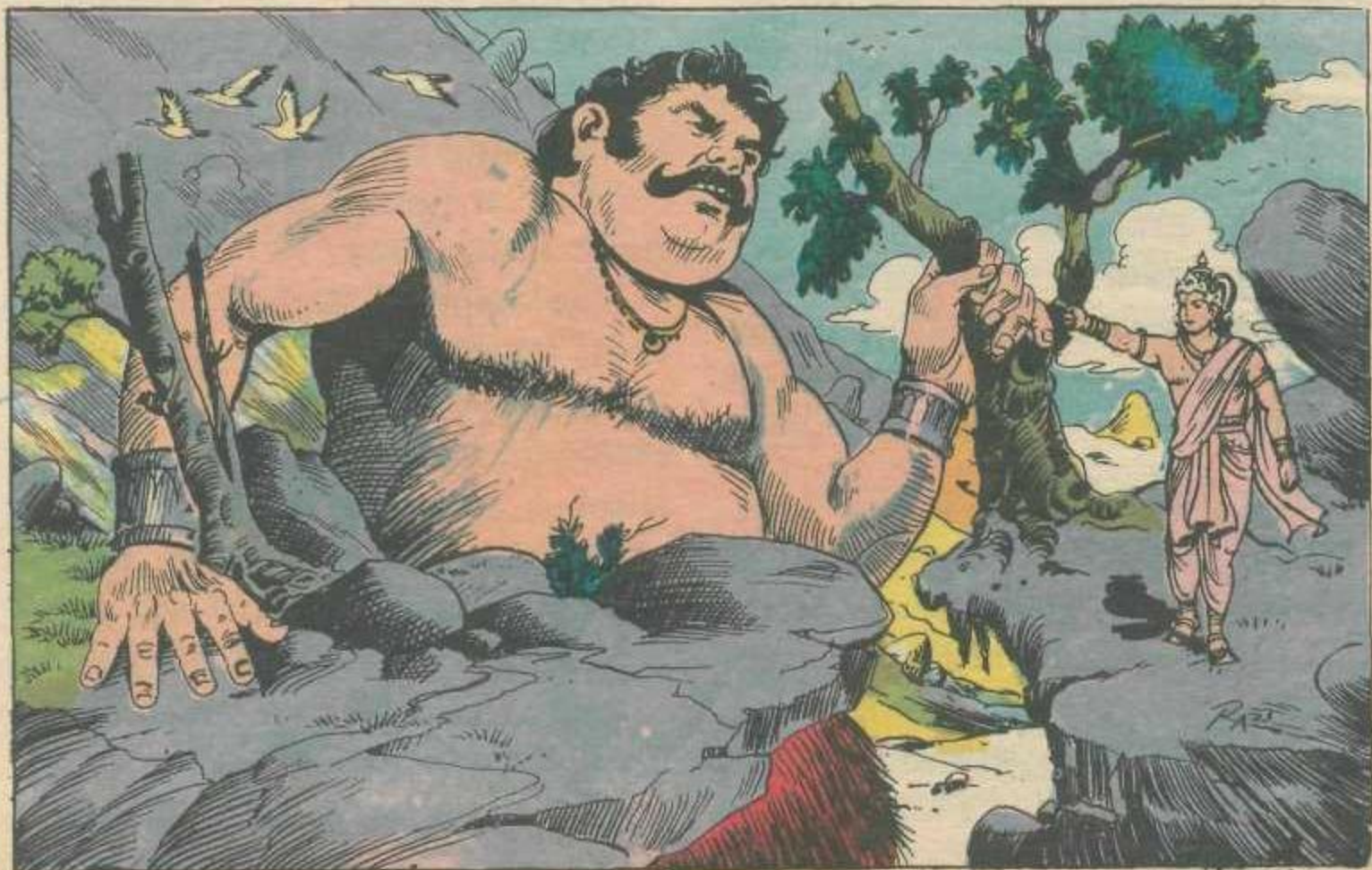
This time his failure surprised him even more. How was it that his power to cast curses was ineffective? He felt sad and after some brooding over the matter, told himself, "Well, pride must have a fall and it was good that I received these

blows."

After a while he saw an old traveller who had collapsed with exhaustion and who was crying for a little water to drink. The gundharva looked here and there, but found no spring or stream nearby. But his eyes fell on a man who looked like a hermit. He had water in his tiny pot. But he sat in meditation.

The gundharva approached him and said, "Hermit, Sir, can I use this water to save a dying traveller?"

The man opened his eyes and blurted out, "You rogue! Do you realise the harm you did to me by disturbing me? Such a





moment comes only once in ten years. Had I completed reciting my hymns, I would have succeeded in destroying all my foes! I must curse you. Become dumb!" The man threw some water on the gundharva while uttering a spell.

"I say, you turn into a rock and lie here for ten years!" said the gundharva.

At once the man turned into a rock. The gundharva carried the water to the traveller and saved his life.

The vampire paused for a moment and then demanded of King Vikram in a challenging tone: "O King, it is well known

that the gundharvas are endowed with many powers. Yet, we see that while Chitravarna's spell did not work on an ordinary guard and an ordinary giant, it worked on a hermit! And what is still more surprising, the hermit's curse proved ineffective on him! What is its mystery? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck."

King Vikram answered forthwith: "What protects human beings are not merely their own powers, capacities or strength. A man is also protected by his





idealism, his faith in a cause and his moral rights. For a curse to be effective, two conditions must be fulfilled. The one to utter a curse must have been really aggrieved, injustice must have been done to him. Secondly, the person cursed must have done the injustice. The guard was protected by the power of his own dedication to his duty. He had the strong faith that it was worth sacrificing his life in discharging his duty. This dedication and this faith came to his rescue. Then comes the case of the giant. He had not stolen the jewel from anybody. He had received it as a reward for his dedicated service to a serpent-prince. He had the moral right over the property. In both the cases the gundharva acted with selfish motives only. That is why

his power was not effective. In the third case he acted out of compassion. His motive was to save a thirsty traveller. Meanwhile he had become humble too. Humility and compassion increased whatever power he already had. On the other hand, the so-called hermit was doing penance with a selfish end, to destroy some people whom he took for his foes. No doubt he was aggrieved, but for a wrong reason. He was not doing his penance to achieve any noble end. He was unprotected by any higher power. Hence the gundharva's curse became effective on him whereas his curse was not effective on the gundharva."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





## GOD AND A CUP OF OIL

“O my Lord, I’ve a great curiosity about one thing. Will you kindly tell me the truth if I ask you?” said Narada.

Vishnu looked at him quizzically. That alerted Narada. He said apologetically, “Of course, my Lord, whatever you say is true or it becomes true. It was unwise of me to ask you if you will tell me the truth!”

Vishnu smiled, “Tell me, my dear sage, what is your question?”

“I want to know how many

true devotees you have on the earth,” said Narada.

“That’s all? Well, there are many!”

Narada looked disappointed. He secretly hoped that the Lord will say something to this effect: “Narada, you surely head the list of my true devotees!” But His answer sounded quite vague!

“Are you sure, my Lord, that there are many? Don’t I already know them?” he asked sceptically.





"Oh no. You don't know most of them, I'm afraid."

"Can you name one of them off hand?" asked Narada.

"Well, take the case of Gopal Das of Bhalapur on the outskirts of the city of Ujjain, for example."

Vishnu had hardly finished giving out the devotee's name and address when Narada took leave of him. Disguised as an ordinary traveller he set out for Ujjain. He enquired about Sage Gopal Das of Bhalapur in Ujjain. Most of the people he met had not heard of Bhalapur, what to speak of Sage Gopal Das! However, Narada found

out that Bhalapur was a small village on the river. He went there and asked the first man he met, "Where is the Ashram of Sage Gopal Das?"

The man looked at him with surprise. "Sage Gopal Das? We have never heard of any such sage!"

Narada continued to put the same question to anybody he met until a farmer told him, "I never knew that there was a sage bearing my name!"

"Is your name Gopal Das?"

"Yes."

"Is there any other Gopal Das in this village?"

"No."





Naradā surveyed the man. Now it was the man's turn to feel surprised. "What is the matter, gentleman?" he asked.

"I had heard of you from a friend. If you don't mind, can I take some rest in your house? I've a long way to go."

Gopal Das happily led Narada to his house. Narada observed that Gopal Das led the life of an ordinary householder. He was found busy attending to a sick relative, disputing his wife on a certain issue, taking his children to task for their negligence of work and conducting himself like any ordinary man. Narada still did not lose hope.

He accompanied Gopal Das when the farmer went to his fields.

After a full day Narada took leave of him. He remembered that the man had uttered Vishnu's name only three times during the whole day.

"My Lord, at least once you made an error. You gave me a wrong address!" Narada complained to Vishnu.

"Is that so? We will see. Meanwhile, dear Narada, will you kindly carry this cup of oil to place it on Mount Meru? You must go at the speed of a human being and the other condition is, not a drop of oil should spill out





of the cup. If it does, the mission will fail," said Vishnu.

Narada took the cup full to the brink with oil. He held it most carefully and step by step proceeded towards Mount Meru. It took him a full day to reach his destination. He was happy that he had not spilt a drop of oil. While returning, he took recourse to his godly power and was back before Vishnu in no time.

"I've done it, my Lord," he said, beaming with satisfaction.

"That's fine. Now, tell me Narada, during your day-long travel, how many times did you remember me?" asked Vishnu.

Narada stood in silence,

trying to remember it. Smile disappeared from his face. "My Lord, all my concentration was on the cup of oil—so that it did not spill!"

"Now, Narada, think of Gopal Das. He carried so many cups of oil—I mean the burden of so many worldly problems. Even then he remembered me thrice during a day—and I alone know with how much intense devotion he did it! Do you really believe that I gave you a wrong address?"

Narada saluted Gopal Das in silence. He bowed to the Lord and said, "I understand, my Lord. You can never speak something which is not true!"





## THE KING'S MESSAGE

**T**he Raja of Mahindhara was a fool, but luckily for him, he had a wise minister, who was always with him.

Once the king paid a visit to a town away from his capital. He had set up a Sanskrit academy there. He called the members of the staff of the academy for a meeting.

It was night when the teachers met the king. The principal bestowed his praise on the king in

verses and then all sat down to listen to what the king had to tell them.

Suddenly the lantern gave away. It became very dark. "Light the lantern!" the king ordered his servant. Five minutes passed. The king shouted to know why there was delay in lighting the lantern.

"My lord, I'm unable to lay my hand on the matchbox. It's so dark!" replied the servant.





"Fool!" screamed the king. "If that is the case, why don't you light the candle first? You can certainly locate the matchbox with the help of the candle!"

Meanwhile the servant had found the matchbox. He lighted the lantern. The minister could observe amusement writ large on the faces of the teachers. They were beginning to fathom their king's wisdom.

But the minister stepped in. "Pundits, learned that you all are, I'm sure you have not failed to catch the significance of His Majesty's observation. You

must not expose the students to the lights of higher learning immediately. Begin with a small lesson—comparable to a candle light. Then proceed to place before them the splendour of greater knowledge. Do you follow?" asked the minister.

"We do. We will never forget the advice, more because of the novel way in which it was imparted to us," said the principal. "That's right," said the others.

The king had by then understood the blunder he had made. He hurried to say, "That is it. I've given my message. You may disperse."





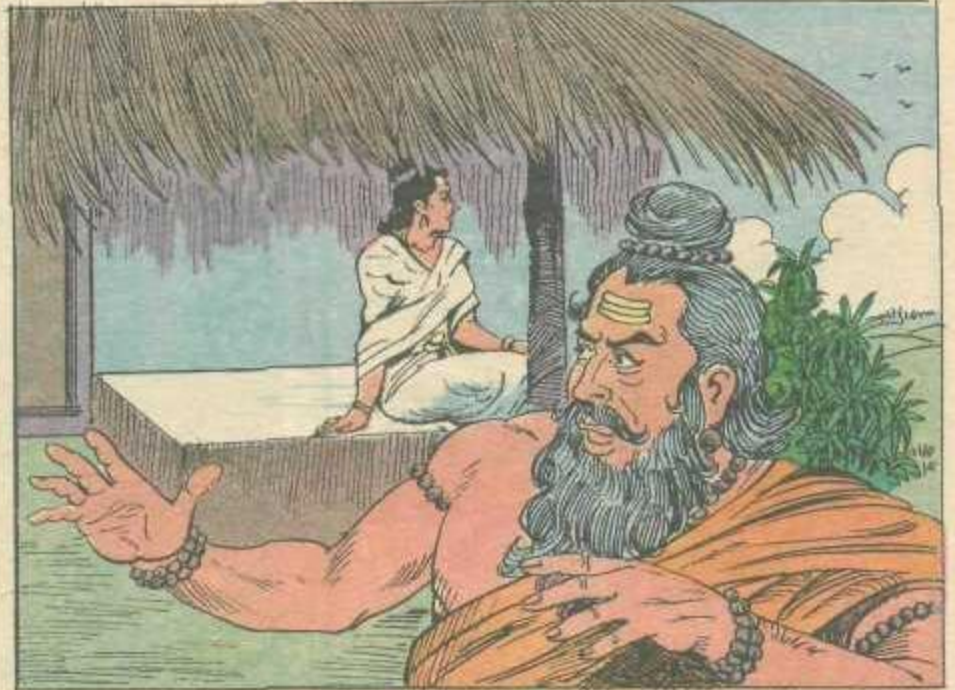
# SHAKUNTALA (2)

(Story so far: The beautiful Shakuntala, the daughter of Sage Viswamitra and nymph Menaka, brought up by Sage Kanva, meets King Dushyanta. They get married. But the king cannot take her away as the sage is absent.)

Sage Kanva, who had great love for the just King Dushyanta, was only too happy to learn of the development. He blessed his adopted daughter and taught her how she should conduct herself as the queen once she goes over to her husband's palace.

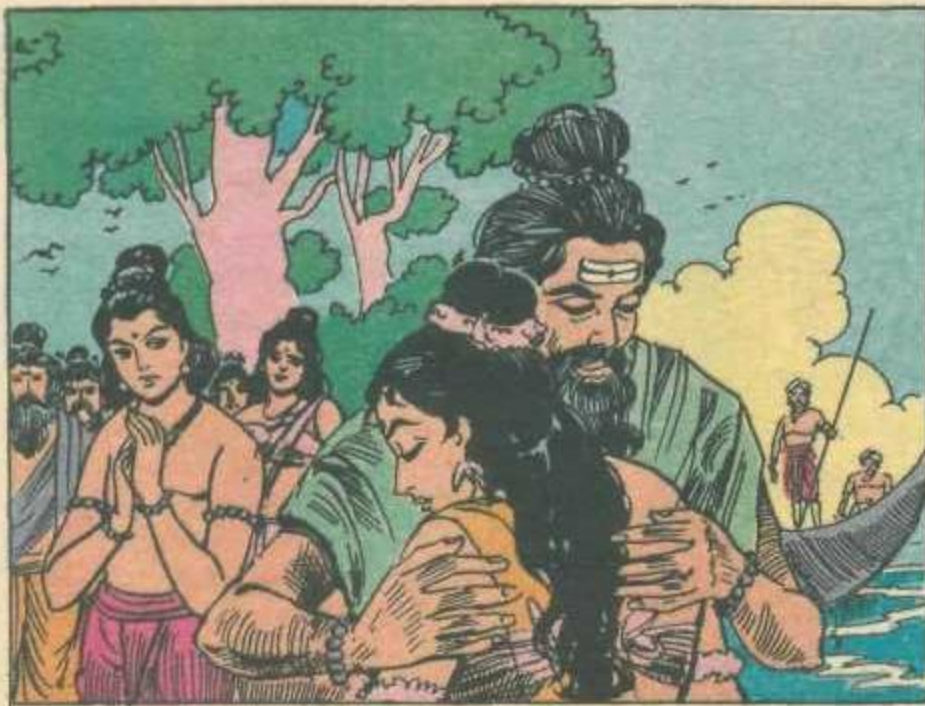


One day, when Sage Kanva was away, Shakuntala sat brooding over Dushyanta. Sage Durvasa visited the hermitage and asked her about Sage Kanva. She was too absorbed in her thoughts to pay attention to him. Durvasa, who was a short-tempered man, cursed her saying that the one of whom she thought so much, would forget her totally.



Shakuntala could not hear him, but the other girls in the Ashram heard the curse. They ran to the sage who was on the way out and entreated upon him to pardon Shakuntala's blunder. The sage relented. He said that the effect of his curse will not be ever-lasting.





Days passed. Sage Kanva arranged for Shakuntala's departure for her husband's palace. She bade farewell to her childhood friends, guardians and teachers and boarded the boat, escorted by a young hermit.

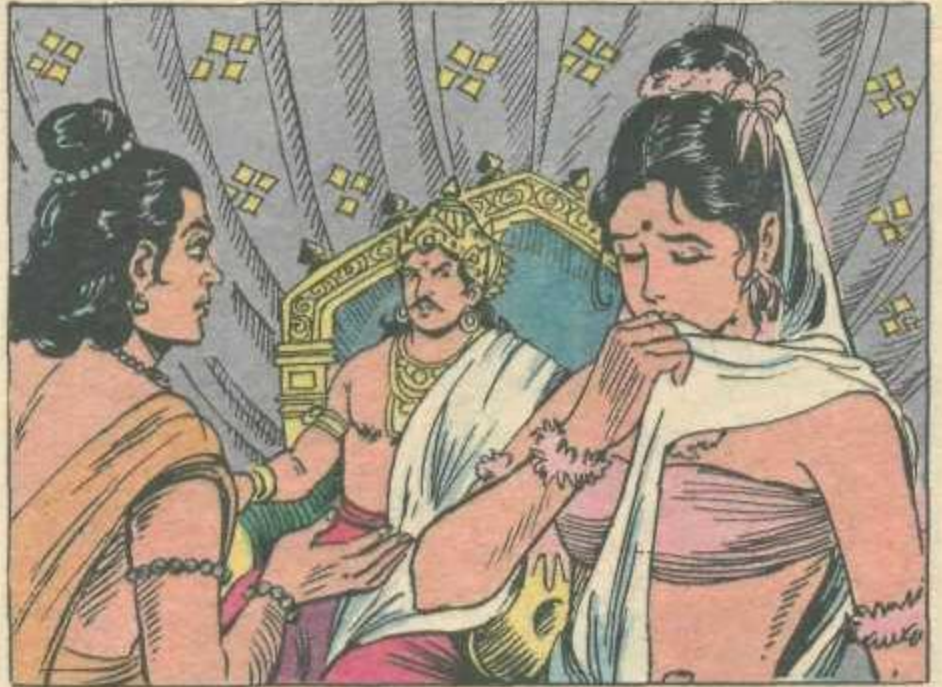
Pleasant was the voyage. While Shakuntala felt very sad to leave the charming hermitage with all the loving people she also dreamt of her happy days with her illustrious husband, as the queen of Hastinapura.



With great expectations she enters the court of King Dushyanta, along with her escort. She is surprised that the king extends no welcome to her. "My Lord, here is Shakuntala, the foster-daughter of Sage Kanva," said her escort.



"Can we be of any help to you?" asked the king. Such a cool reception shocked Shakuntala. Asked the young hermit, "My Lord, don't you recognise her? Didn't you marry her while you visited my master's Ashram?"



"Good God! These strangers have arrived to scandalise me!" said the king. "How dare you make such an audacious claim? Go away, lest our wrath results in awarding you punishment!"



"Well, the king must remember me once I produce the ring he had presented to me," Shakuntala told her escort. She looked for the ring in her finger. Alas, it had disappeared! She guessed it must have slipped into the river while she played with the water.







Needless to say, Sage Durvasa's curse had made the king totally forget Shakuntala. Now he felt more sad than angry at the behaviour of the lady who looked like a stranger to him. Shakuntala and the young hermit left the court.

Suddenly Menaka, the nymph, felt the anguish of her daughter. She descended before her and took her in her embrace and carried her to the safety of a hermitage. She knew that Shakuntala was to become a mother soon.



Shakuntala, in her new shelter, gave birth to a son. Named Bharata, he grew up under her loving care. He was brave, intelligent and strong—the pride of his mother and other inmates of the hermitage.

—To continue



## THE WONDERFUL TREE

**K**ishore had just stepped out of his hut when something fell from a flying bird's beak. Kishore looked at the bird. It did not look familiar. Then he looked at the thing thrown by the creature. It was a tiny fruit, looking more like a seed, also quite unfamiliar to Kishore.

"The bird must be flying from one unknown land to another. This tiny fruit must be unknown in this land," he thought. He buried it in front of his hut and sprinkled a little water on it. Then he went away to the vil-

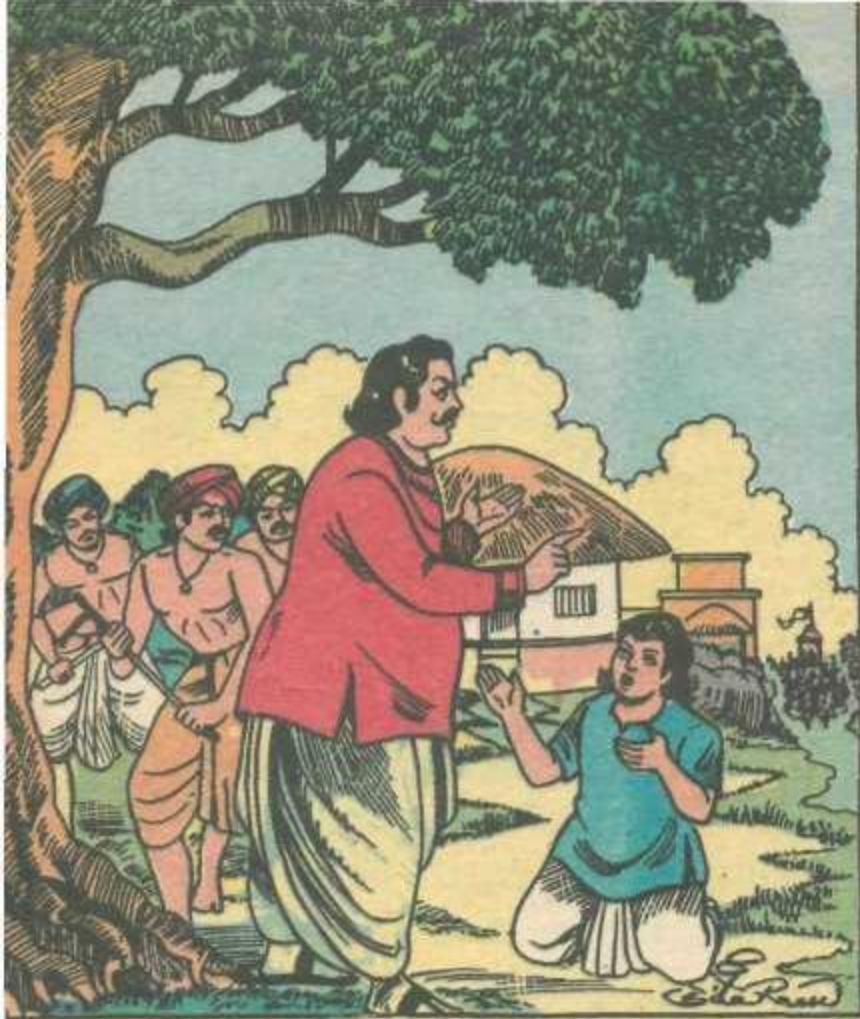
lage landlord's field for work. He was only twelve, but work he must for a living. There was nobody else to support him after the untimely death of his parents.

Three days later, as he would step out of his hut one morning, he saw two tender leaves sprouting out of the earth before his hut. He knew that the sprout must be from the seed he had sowed. He made a fence around it and watered it.

In one month the plant grew tall enough for its top to touch







his waist and in another month it equalled his height. But there was something very wonderful about it. It gave out such a delightful fragrance that any passer-by would be charmed by it.

The plant began to grow rapidly and became a handsome tree. The bigger it grew, the more fragrant it became. People came to see it. Many of them spent hours near it. And they said, "Because Kishore is so sweet a boy, the unknown bird brought him such a wonderful gift!"

The landlord, of course, was the last man in the village to

hear about the wonder. It was because he spent much of his time sleeping or gambling. He had no time or interest for other things.

But when he heard about it, he came to see it. "Hm! I like the fragrance," he told Kishore and the crowd. "Uproot it and plant it outside the window of my bedroom," he told his attendants.

Kishore looked pale. He knelt down before the landlord and said, "Sir, we know nothing about this plant. Who can say if it will not die when uprooted? Let it be here!"

"Shut up, you fool! How dare you advise me?" shouted the landlord and he asked his men to begin digging around the tree.

But just then the sound of drums and bugles could be heard from the turn of the road. The sound was well-known. It announced the king's approach.

All the people, including the landlord, stood alert, ready to bow down to the king when his chariot would pass by them. Soon the royal chariot was there; the king sat in it along with his beautiful little daughter.





"What is happening here?" asked the king.

"Wherefrom comes this wonderful fragrance?" asked the sweet little princess.

Both of them got down.

The landlord fumbled. But the village teacher told the king all about the tree. Kishore was produced before him.

The princess smiled and took hold of Kishore's hand and said, "You must be a very nice boy to be bestowed with such a gift by God!"

"He is a very nice boy, O noble princess," said the teacher.

"What a pity that such a

handsome tree does not sport any flower! The flower must be much more fragrant!" said the little princess. And before anybody could stop her, she climbed the tree and went up to its top branch.

"You look like a flower!" said Kishore.

"Why don't you come along too?" asked the princess.

Kishore climbed the tree in the twinkling of an eye and was beside the princess in the very next moment.

"Oh, both of you look like two beautiful flowers!" said all the people in a chorus.

And something strange began





to happen. The princess and Kishore turned into two flowers!

All stood stunned! After a long time, the king asked tearfully, "How can I go away without my daughter?"

There was no answer to this question. The king camped under the tree. Hundreds of men gathered around him. Then night fell. The king kept awake till the early hour of the next day. Then he fell asleep for a moment.

"Father, get up!" A sweet voice awakened him. He was delighted to find his daughter standing near him. With his daughter was Kishore.

It was dawn. The king looked and saw hundreds of flowers abloom in the tree. Obviously, the princess and Kishore had inspired the hidden flowers to bloom.

The king took Kishore with him. In course of time he married the princess and, as the king had no son, succeeded him to the throne.

Every day Kishore and the princess would visit the tree. Both of them would spend some time in Kishore's old hut.

Many years later, ripe of age, Kishore died. The tree began to wither. And when the princess died, the tree too died.

—Devapriyo.





A tale from Scotland

## THE WIZARD'S SECRET

In a mountainous region of Scotland lived a wizard. He could command rain and wind at his will; he could scare anybody by producing strange eerie noises near his ears and do many similar things, good, not-so-good and even bad.

He had become very famous. Landlords and high officers and common men, all paid respects to him. He earned a lot of money. He built a mansion for himself.

There were a number of ser-

vants to do his chores. Whenever he would go out to attend a function or to cure somebody possessed by an evil spirit his servants will follow him carrying his clothes, seat, food and other things. But he did not let them carry only one thing: his magic book. That was a huge volume given to him by his master. "Never, never, never let anybody else open it. You know what happens the moment it is opened!"

The wizard knew. The moment he opened it, hundreds of







spirits appeared around him. Nobody but the person who has opened the book can see them.

The wizard always carried the book himself to avoid the risk of anybody else opening it.

One day he was summoned by the king who wished to see him perform some miracle and the same time to honour him. He set forth in style. He rode a horse while his servants followed him. He was not quite accustomed to riding horses. He found it difficult to carry the book and to hold the rein.

"My master, why don't you let me hold the book?" proposed one of his young servants

a new recruit to his service. The wizard was fond of him.

The wizard yielded. "Hold it, but never open it!" said the wizard.

The small procession started for the king's palace which was beyond a vast valley. The horse went faster. The wizard's old experienced servants managed to keep pace with the horse, but the young man fell behind.

Tired, he sat down near a spring and drank from it and relaxed. By and by the mysterious book aroused great curiosity in him. "My master does not wish us to open it lest we should learn some magic formulae! But he is not here to see me!"

He opened the book. Of course, he could not read a thing for the text was not written in any plain language. Soon he heard a strange hissing sound. He looked and saw hundreds of weird creatures coming pressing towards him.

"Task, task for us, task!" they said in a grim, nasal voice. The young man did not know what work to give them. He said, "Wait!"

"Task, task, task!" they said more impatiently. They pressed



against him. They had no physical bodies, still the young man could feel their touch. It was very uncomfortable.

"All right. Gather all the dry creepers and roll them into ropes!" commanded the young man.

The spirits dispersed. The young man heaved a sigh of relief and went on turning the pages of the book, hopeful of finding at least one passage which he could understand.

He had hardly turned two or three pages when the hissing was heard again. He looked and saw rolls of ropes before him.

"Tasks, tasks, tasks!" said the spirits.

"Oh the botheration!" the young man told himself. Suddenly, in a flash, he got an idea. "Go to the seashore and make ropes out of the sand!" he said, happy with his cleverness.

The spirits dispersed. "Now they will go on labouring in vain and I will be in peace!" the young man told himself.

He was in peace for five minutes. The hissing sound was heard once again—this time louder. "How dare you play with us!" they screamed, "You cannot make ropes out of sands



and the task has no meaning. You have been false to us. We will leave this region, never to be back!"

They went away.

The young man stood up and walked to his destination. The moment the wizard saw him, he took the book from him. He had started regretting for handing over the book to his servant. He opened the book and in no time knew that the spirits had departed forever.

The young man took to his heels to avoid the wizard's wrath. The wizard, a sad man, told the king that he had become an ordinary man.





## DID YOU KNOW?



The name of the island on which Tokyo and the next five largest cities of Japan are situated is not Japan but Honshu. Japan is the name for the entire 2,000-mile-long chain of islands consisting of 3,300 islands.

The national anthem of Japan, containing only four lines, was written in the 9th century. It is the oldest national anthem in the world.



Before the party of Columbus brought chocolate to Spain, only the Aztec Indians of Mexico ate it in a raw form and they believed that it gave them knowledge of the gods.

Snakes can remain contented with one meal in a fortnight; penguins don't mind going without food a full month. But the snails beat them all in the game. They can live without eating for three years!



The citizens of Bogor in Java, Indonesia, can hear thunderclaps on 322 days a year. The city falls within a climatic region which produces more than 3,000 thunderstones every night.

The first greeting cards were designed by W. Harvey and engraved by John Thompson of London in 1829.





## WHEN THE GRAPES ARE SOUR

Today we propose to answer a number of queries on the meaning of certain infrequently used phrases. Meaning of such phrases can be found in any dictionary of quality and size, but dictionaries are not expected to illustrate their use through examples.

*Lock, stock and barrel* means completely, with nothing left behind. "They moved their establishment to a new building *lock, stock and barrel* the moment they heard that the owner of the old building had decided to increase its rent."

While it means that they did not leave any section of their establishment or anything connected with it in the old building, there is a sense of urgency implied in their movement, a sense of determination to shift completely. In the present case the urgency is perhaps due to the tenants' desire to record their protest against the rent increase, in another case it may be out of some fear. This is important, because the idiomatic use of words and phrases can be justified only when they convey the total sense that goes with them.

*Hand over fist* means gaining something rapidly and steadily. Generally the phrase applies to making monetary profit. "In his new enterprise he is making money *hand over fist*." A variation of the phrase is *hand over hand*—as you swim forward with stroke after stroke of hands, rapidly.

*Sour grapes* is a phrase which refers to something which one desired to have, but could not have. "Bhatt says that he never wanted to be a minister. No doubt a case of sour grapes!"

Haven't you read Aesop's fable of the fox and the grapes? The fox desired to reach the hanging grapes, jumped several times, but could not reach the bunch. It went away saying, "Who cares for these sour grapes!"

Man has not changed much since Aesop's time!







**Which living Indian languages are among the oldest in the world?**

—Shankaran P.,  
Madurai.

Sanskrit and Tamil.

**How many language editions *Chandamama* has?**

—Vijaya Das,  
Patna.

Twelve at present, including Sanskrit and English, but excluding Braille editions given free for the blind.

**What is MacMahon Line?**

—Ghanashyam Meher,  
Junagarh

MacMahon Line is the boundary line drawn up by Sir Henry MacMahon, an officer of the Political Department of the Govt. of India, between India on one side and Tibet and China on the other, along the North-Eastern frontier of India.

**I was asked 'Of which state of India the Capital is Kavaratti?' I could not answer and I have not yet been able to find out. Please help, unless the question is wrong.**

—Suman Chaturvedi,  
Agra.

The question is only technically wrong, for Kavaratti is the capital of Lakshadweep which is not a state but our smallest Union Territory with an area of 32 sq. km.



## PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Nataraajan



Mohan D. Desai

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for November '87 goes to:-

S. Sunil Pai,

189, Raj Kamal, 15th Main,

IV 'T' Block, Jayanagar,

Bangalore-41.

The Winning Entry:- "Blowing Perfection" & "Glowing Reflection"

## PICKS FROM THE WISE

Behaviour alone it is that creates friends and foes.

— Chanakya

What you set free is yours forever; clutch at it and it is gone!

— Tagore

Good humour is goodness and wisdom combined.

— Owen Meredith



No share prices,  
no political fortunes, yet...

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— from an IMRB survey  
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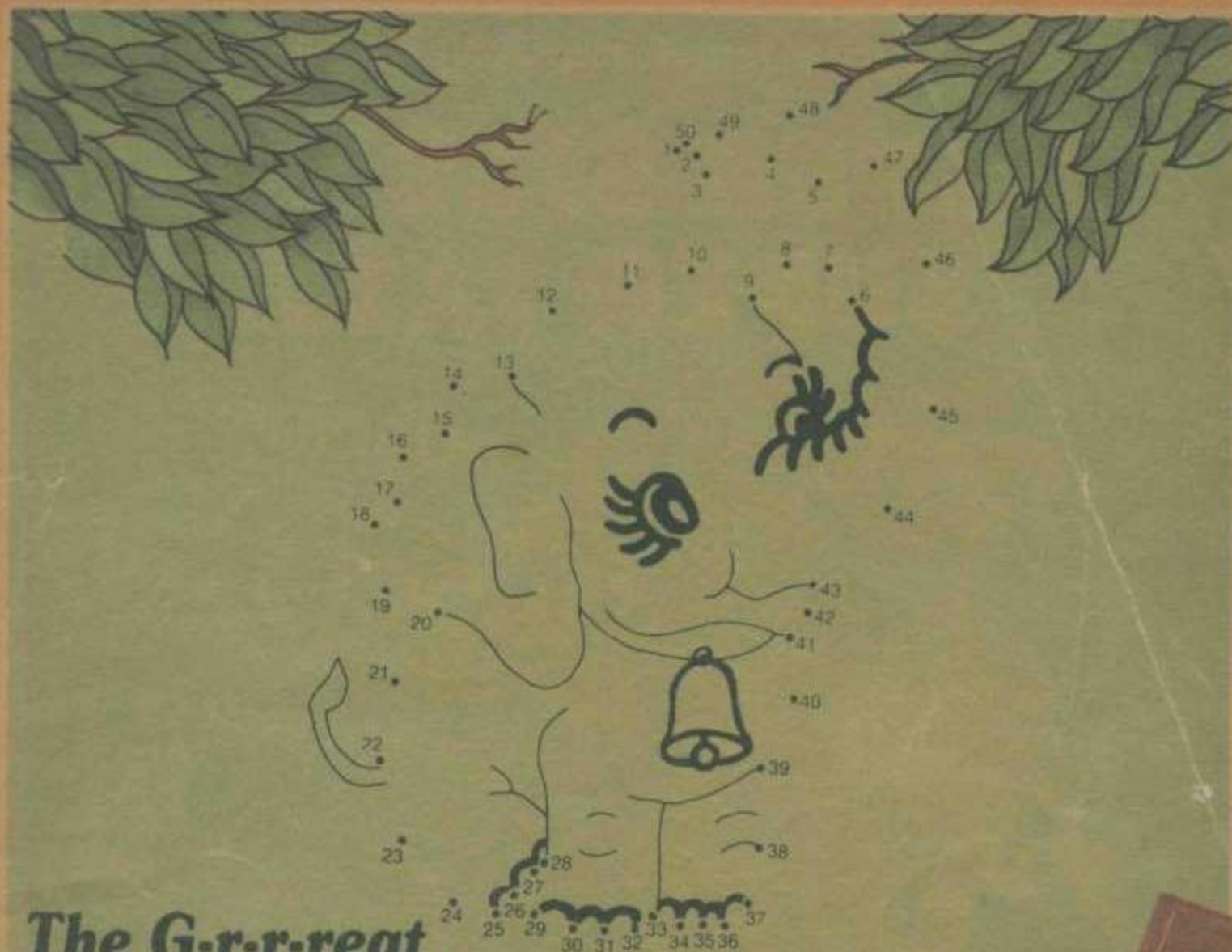
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